



The Project Safe Neighborhoods Household Survey (PSNHS):

Part I: PSN – Alaska Program Evaluation Baseline Data

Report prepared for
Project Safe Neighborhoods, Alaska

by

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Executive Summary

This study sought to establish baseline measures of Anchorage residents' awareness and perceptions of the Alaska *PSN* initiative and to learn about their public safety concerns at the neighborhood level. Results show that a year and a half into Alaska's *PSN* initiative, Anchorage residents were more aware of the specific penalties under federal law for illegal possession of a firearm than the programmatic efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement officials to reduce the level of gun crime in the city. Despite efforts to "get the word out" through local media and community outreach, relatively few respondents recognized either of the *PSN* slogans or the *Hard Time for Gun Crime* message disseminated by *PSN*. That being said, knowledge of the *PSN* initiative and the deterrent message *did* reach some; future efforts could work to build on this foundation.

Analysis of an index of "collective deterrence" measures reveals that Anchorage residents do not perceive much disincentive for engaging in prohibited conduct with weapons. Half of the sample thought it *somewhat* or *very* likely that a person would be detected for illegal possession of a gun; only slightly fewer thought it unlikely. Overall, Anchorage residents do think a prosecution will take place *if* a person is caught committing a gun crime, but the vast majority doubt prosecution will happen quickly and nearly the same percentage think a conviction will be the result of a plea agreement to a lesser charge. Finally, respondents conveyed in a strong way their perception that a person convicted of a gun crime would not receive a long prison sentence (presumably due to their perception that convictions will be the product of a plea agreement). In short, the data suggest that, at best, there is a low level of deterrence preventing people from committing gun crimes, particularly illegal possession offenses, among the general population.

Regarding Anchorage residents' perceptions of crime problems in the city and in their respective neighborhoods, findings from the Project Safe Neighborhoods Household Survey (PSNHS) show there to be little community concern about violent crimes (general and gun-related), youth misbehavior or racial/ethnic conflict *at the neighborhood level*. However, when asked if they thought gun crime was on the rise in Anchorage as whole, a majority of the sample told interviewers it was, suggesting a halo effect whereby residents deny the possibility of serious social dislocations in their own neighborhood and project them onto other areas in the city. Future analyses of PSNHS data will examine in greater detail the patterns of response across Anchorage neighborhoods.

INTRODUCTION

In March 2004 the Justice Center at UAA completed the first iteration of the *Project Safe Neighborhoods Household Survey* (PSNHS). The purpose of the PSNHS was to provide the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), Alaska District, task force with baseline information in six areas: 1) collective deterrence; 2) public perceptions of gun crime levels; 3) public perceptions of community-level problems; 4) public awareness of local gun violence prevention efforts, including criminal penalties; 5) sources of public knowledge regarding crime; and 6) an estimate of the lifetime prevalence of firearm possession. A second iteration of the study is planned for spring 2005 as part of a pre-test, post-test research design to examine the impact of the *PSN* initiative in Alaska.

A survey questionnaire was administered via telephone to two parallel samples of Anchorage households. The survey's design allowed interviewers to query up to three residents within each household, including juveniles between 12 and 17 years of age with parental/guardian consent. Households were selected for inclusion in the study in one of two ways: 1) random generation of a phone number based on all valid numbers within all telephone *exchanges* assigned to the city of Anchorage (termed "exchange" sample); 2) random selection of phone numbers based on all *listed* household phone numbers in the city of Anchorage (termed "listed" sample). In general, there were no discernable differences in results across the two samples. A complete description of the study methodology is provided in Appendix A.

Deterrence

A primary focus of PSNHS was to establish baseline measures of *deterrence* in order to gauge the effects of the task force's efforts at the conclusion of the project. Measurement and assessment of the concept are essential because deterrence theory serves as the orienting doctrine of the U.S. Justice Department's *Project Safe Neighborhoods* initiative. The theory of deterrence is grounded in the idea that people act in ways that maximize benefit while simultaneously minimizing cost (called "marginal utility"). In other words, human behavior is conceived as the result of a continual series of cost – benefit

analyses. In addition, deterrence theory assumes that human beings are “rational” and use “reason,” which involves a cognitive ability far exceeding mere comprehension or awareness. It implies a particular capacity of people to not only determine costs and benefits, quantify them and then compare them, but also to make inferences about *future* outcomes through the calculation of probabilities based on their perceptions of present circumstances. By combining these two elements, a vision of human behavior emerges where men and women are future-oriented, taking only those actions they believe will maximize benefits and minimize costs. Therefore, according to deterrence theory, authorities can prevent undesirable behavior in the future – gun crime in this case – from occurring by altering its marginal utility – that is, by increasing its costs relative to its benefits.

Beyond these basic assumptions about human nature, deterrence relies on four interrelated factors to be effective. The first, and most important, factor for effective deterrence is people’s *awareness* of the costs for engaging in a particular unwanted behavior. A person must be made aware of sanctions. The significance of the subjective, perceptual dimension of deterrence can’t be overstated because if a person doesn’t know of the costs associated with contemptuous conduct, it is impossible for him or her to make an accurate cost – benefit calculation.

On top of the requirement that individuals perceive costs, they must also believe such costs are *likely to be incurred*. This factor is known as sanction *certainty* and it pertains to each step of the criminal process, from detection, to prosecution, to sentencing. If a person does not think punishment is likely to occur for undesirable conduct, whether or not it is actually likely to be meted out, there is, at best, only a limited disincentive, and at worst, none at all for engaging in prohibited conduct.

A third factor said to influence the efficacy of deterrence is the temporal proximity between a prohibited act and the infliction of penalty, also known as sanction *celerity*. Swiftens of sanction accomplishes both a cognitive aim – to clearly associate the penalty with the undesirable act in the mind of the offender – and an affective goal – to induce emotions and feelings in the individual such as shame, remorse, regret and fear. As the length of time between undesirable behavior and sanction

increases, the link between a particular penalty and a specific act becomes tenuous and the potential for inculcating moral approbation dissipates.

Finally, deterrence is effective to the extent that the costs associated with engaging in unwanted behavior are such that they exceed the sum total of benefits and gains produced by it. This is termed sanction *severity*. The amount by which costs need to exceed benefits for a deterrent effect to emerge is largely unknown since the amount of benefit derived from any behavior, prohibited or not, varies from person to person. To overcome this problem of cost specification, deterrence policies generally err on the side of exceedingly heavy penalties to ensure that the costs of unwanted conduct are high enough to exceed any obtained benefits.

Community Outreach

PSN is more than just a program aimed at increasing levels of deterrence through increased penalties. It is a philosophical commitment to the idea of shared public safety responsibilities between local communities and government. *PSN* achieves this by actively engaging the community in its efforts to reduce levels of gun crime and its attendant problems.

Historically, criminal justice initiatives have been structured so that law enforcement officials – police, prosecutors and correctional personnel – have told communities what their problems were. Then, if a community was fortunate, justice officials would inform citizens what they (criminal justice agencies) were going to do to solve the identified problem. Public input has generally not been solicited, or has been ignored, at all stages of the process.

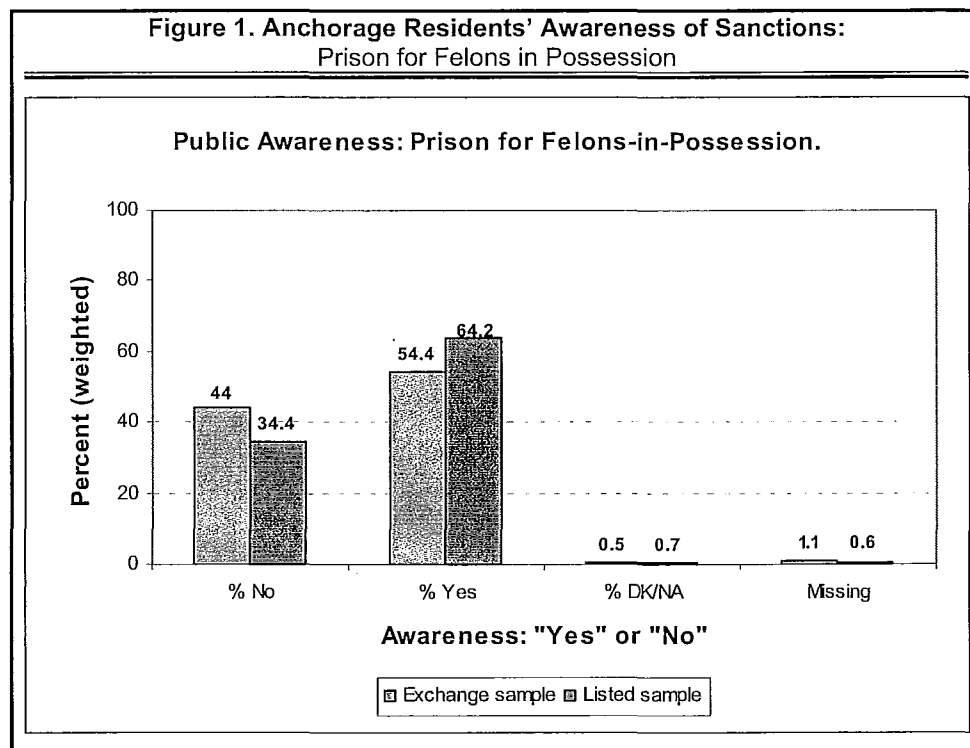
In contrast to this mode of operation, members of the *PSN* group have actively sought partnerships with members of the local community who can tell them what problems are most pressing for the people who live and work there. This information is then incorporated into standard organizational information sources to design intervention strategies and develop comprehensive prevention efforts. *PSNHS* included a series of questions aimed at getting a community-level view of

gun crime and the problems thought to be associated with it. The responses are presented in the second section of the report.

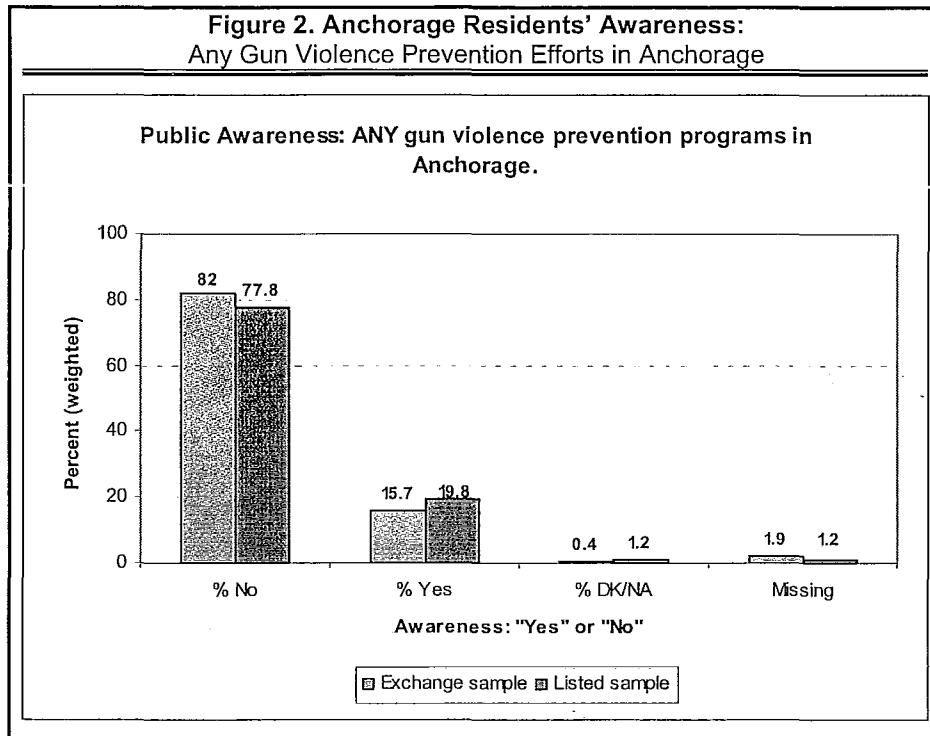
FINDINGS

Awareness of PSN Initiative

In keeping with the logic of deterrence theory set forth in the preceding pages, the presentation of primary findings of PSNHS begins with a presentation of Anchorage residents' *awareness* of sanctions for gun crime. (The next section of the report discusses measures aimed at the perceived *likelihood* of specific sanctions for gun crime.) Prosecution of felons-in-possession by the U.S. Attorney is the central law enforcement intervention employed by the *PSN* task force in Alaska; therefore, respondents were asked whether or not they were aware that under federal law a convicted felon could be sent to prison for simply possessing a firearm, regardless of how the gun was obtained and whether or not the person used it in the commission of a crime. Results show a somewhat low-level awareness of this legal penalty among the general public of Anchorage (Figure 1) although separate analyses (not shown here) show that those who reported having possessed a firearm at sometime in their life were almost twice as likely to say they were aware of this penalty as those who had never possessed a gun.

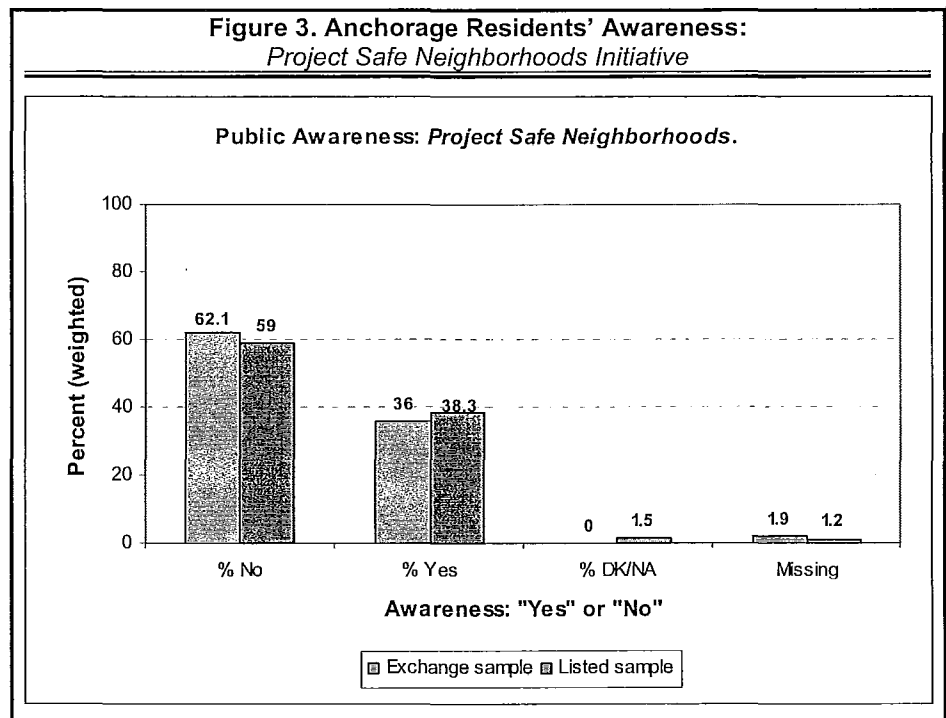


PSNHS interviewers also asked respondents, absent clues related to specific programs, about their awareness of gun violence prevention efforts in the Anchorage area: “Do you know of any gun violence prevention programs here in Anchorage?”

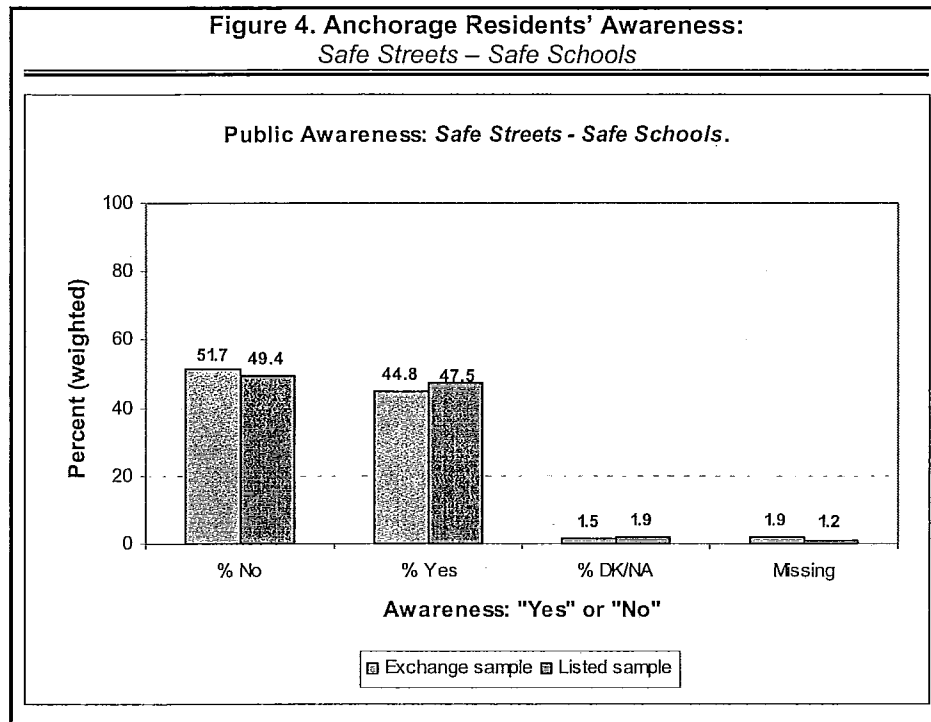


As shown in Figure 2, less than one in five Anchorage residents reported being aware of *gun violence prevention efforts* in the Anchorage area, suggesting that the *PSN* initiative enjoyed only limited success in “getting the word out.” But these data are a bit misleading.

When asked about *specific* gun violence programs, Anchorage residents reported a much greater level of program awareness. The percentage of respondents saying *yes* increased from roughly one out of every six to about one in three when asked



specifically if they had ever heard of the *Project Safe Neighborhoods* initiative (Figure 3).

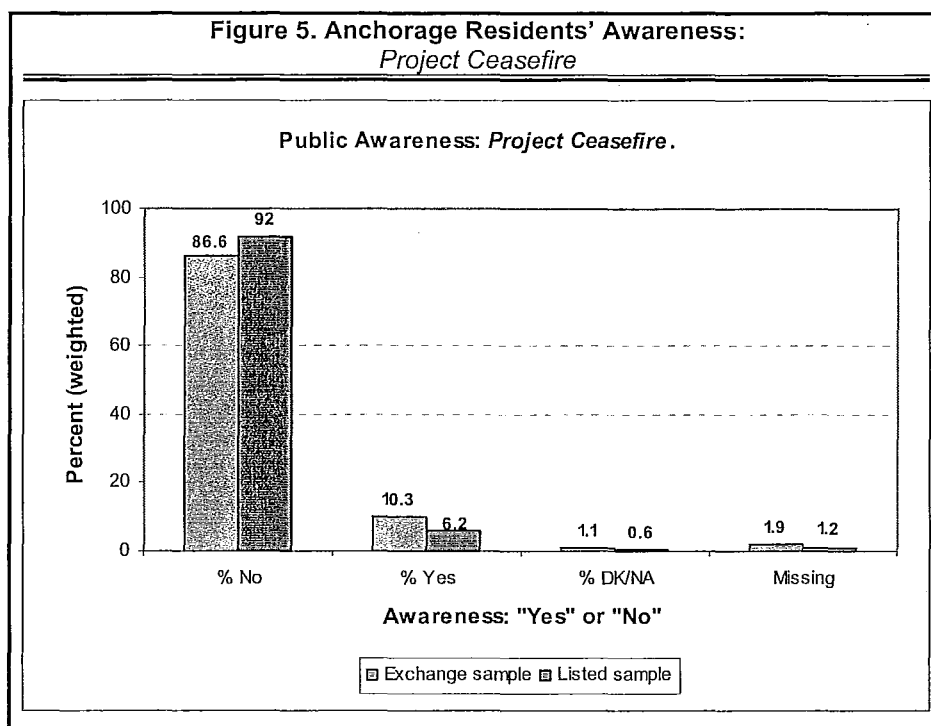


Better still, when asked about Alaska's particular version of the PSN initiative, called the *Safe Streets – Safe Schools* initiative, almost half of the sample stated that they had heard of the program (Figure 4). On the other hand, both measures show that fewer than half of all

Anchorage residents were aware of the program at the time of the survey, highlighting the amount of work that remains to raise public awareness of *PSN*.

Cognizant that some might be skeptical that PSNHS respondents were *really* aware of the *PSN* program in Anchorage, the survey included a confederate measure – a question about a gun violence prevention program that does not exist in Alaska. Respondents were asked if they had ever heard of the *Project Ceasefire* program, a gun violence intervention program conducted in several jurisdictions in the eastern United States – a program that would not be well known, if at all, by Alaskans. By comparing the percentage of *yes* responses for the confederate item to those for the *Project Safe Neighborhoods* and *Safe Streets – Safe Schools* questions, a rough assessment can be made about the veracity of respondents' answers. According to this measure of respondent candor, PSNHS respondents were truthful. Less than one in ten respondents said they had heard of *Project Ceasefire* – a figure significantly lower than either of the *PSN* measures (Figure 5). It was not surprising that roughly one in ten residents had knowledge of *Project Ceasefire* since it is a bonafide gun violence prevention effort; a

person would expect that at least some members of the public would be at least somewhat familiar with it.

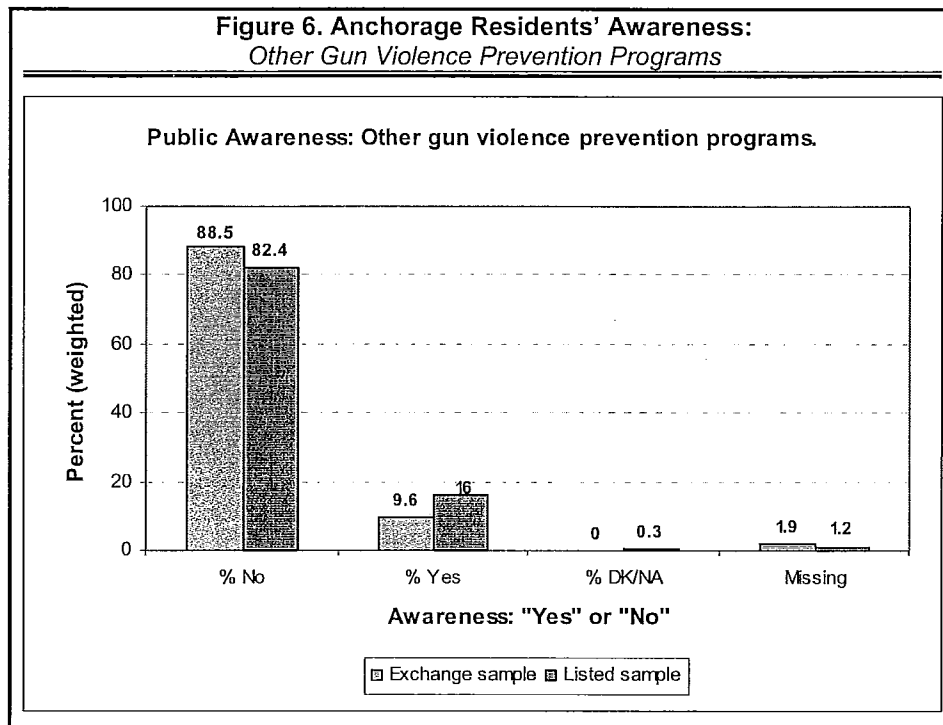


From these data we can reasonably infer that respondents did not falsely state that they had heard of either *Project Safe Neighborhoods* or *Safe Streets – Safe Schools*. If they had, we would expect to see similar percentages between all three items identifying specific programs.

These three measures highlight some important issues: 1) when it comes to identifying gun violence prevention efforts, respondents are more likely to recall specific program names than general policy movements (“Safe Streets – Safe Schools” vs. “Any gun violence prevention efforts”); 2) when asked about their knowledge of specific gun violence prevention efforts, Anchorage respondents answer honestly; and 3) the *PSN* initiative has been successful in making Alaska’s version of *PSN* known to a significant portion of the Anchorage public.

Presented in Figure 6 is one final piece of data which supports the methodological point made above concerning the need for question specificity. The last question posed regarding program awareness was another broad question asking respondents if they had heard about “any other gun

violence prevention programs in Anchorage.” Holding true to the assertion that respondents require a specific program name, the percentage of respondents who reported having heard of other gun violence prevention programs once again dropped to around ten percent.

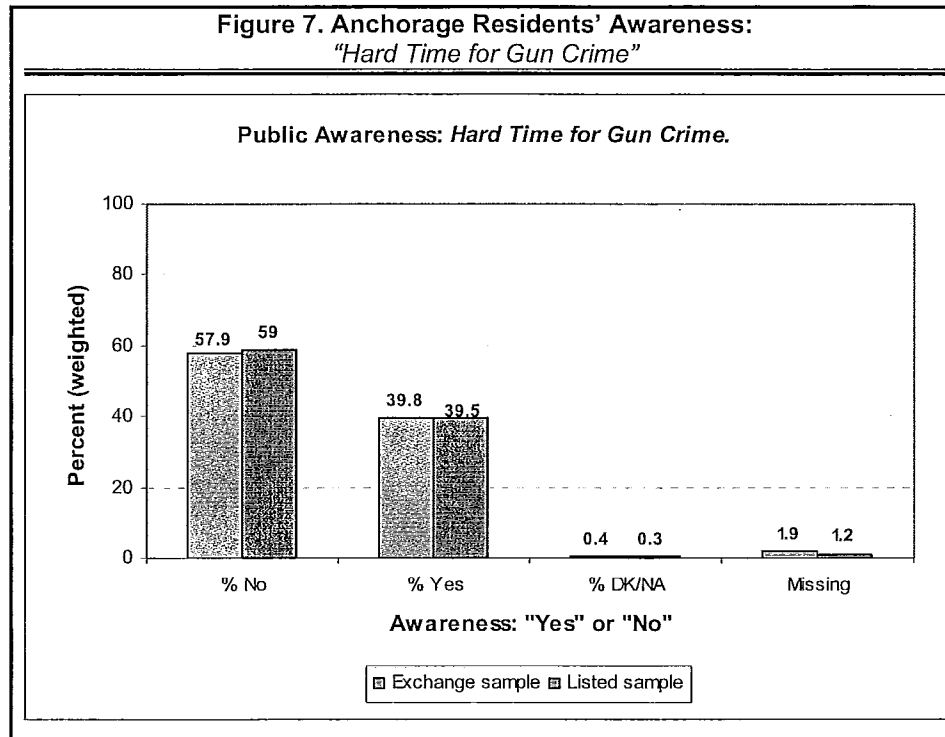


The last measure of the public's awareness of Alaska's *PSN* initiative focused on the initiative's media campaign. PSNHS interviewers asked survey participants if they had ever heard the phrase *Hard Time for Gun Crime*, the primary deterrent message of the

PSN program. Public service announcements had been playing on local television channels for months prior to the administration of the survey, and the *PSN* task force wanted to know if this particular message had filtered out to the general population. Preliminary evidence suggests that there has been a noticeable, but limited, dispersion throughout the Anchorage community (Figure 7).

Taken as a whole, these data suggest that residents are much more conscious of the specific legal consequences of illegal gun possession for convicted felons than of broad-based efforts taken by law enforcement officials to prevent and contain gun violence in Anchorage. There appears to be only a vague sense of the programmatic aspects of local gun violence prevention efforts, including the *Project Safe Neighborhoods* initiative, among Anchorage residents. Only one-third of those recognized the *Project Safe Neighborhoods* slogan, and less than half reported familiarity with the *Safe Streets – Safe Schools* program. Moreover, fewer than four in ten respondents said they had heard the phrase *Hard*

Time for Gun Crime. In contrast, a significantly larger percentage (54% for the “exchange” sample; 66% for the “listed” sample) reported knowledge of the penalty under federal law for illegal possession of firearms by convicted felons, particularly among those who reported having possessed a firearm before (71%).

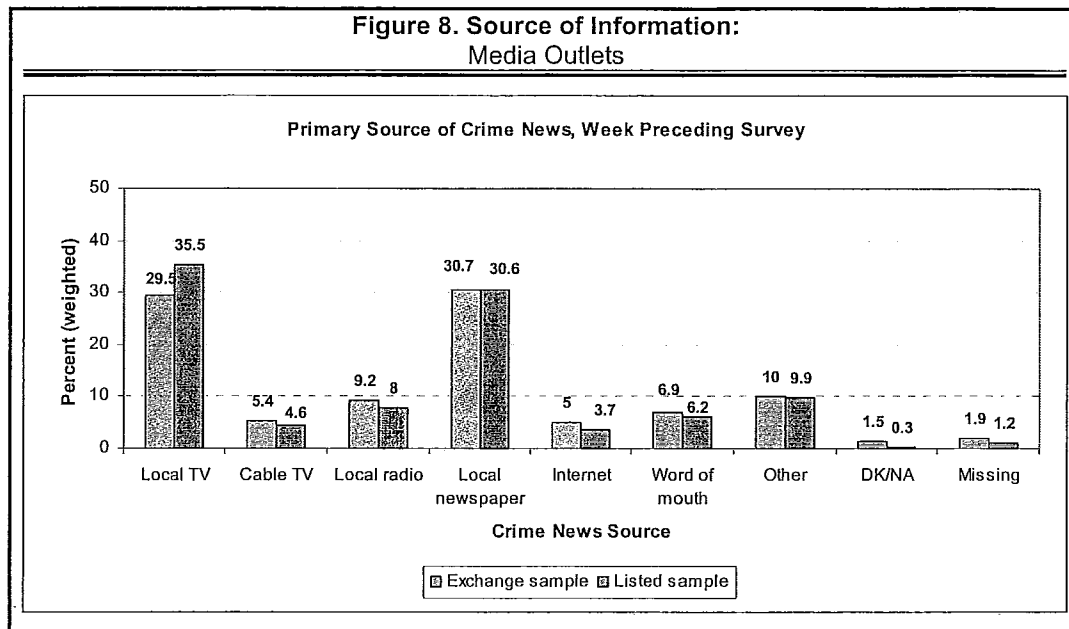


For *PSN* members the message from these data are clear: while there is evidence of early success, there remains much work left to be done to raise Anchorage residents' collective consciousness regarding the initiative's efforts to reduce violence.

Sources of Information Regarding Law Enforcement Efforts

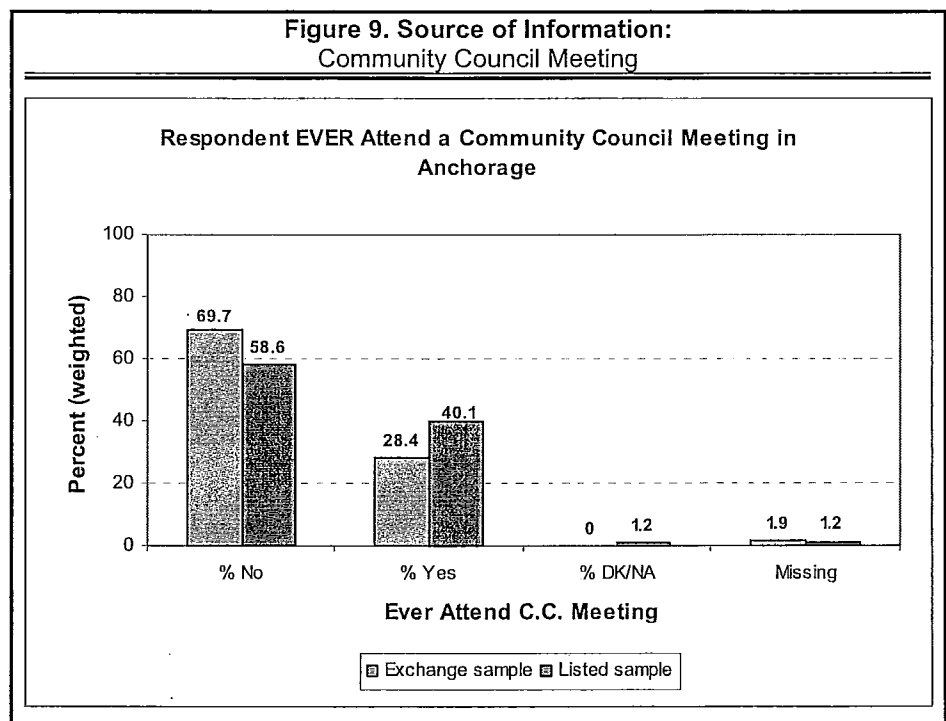
Alaska's *PSN* program has adopted a two-pronged strategy for its public information and outreach campaign. The first prong has been a media-based strategy to communicate the legal consequences of gun crime (*Hard Time for Gun Crime*). The second strategy has been to establish links with grass roots organizations at the neighborhood/community level, such as community councils. In thinking about how Alaska's *PSN* initiative might go about raising community awareness of both penalties and law enforcement activities, it is important for task force members to understand where people get their information about crime issues. PSNHS asked survey respondents from what source they received most of their crime news in the seven days preceding the survey. A majority of Anchorage residents said they received their crime news from local sources – a local television channel; a local

radio station; or a local newspaper. Significantly fewer respondents reported getting their crime news from cable television, the internet, word of mouth or other information sources (Figure 8).



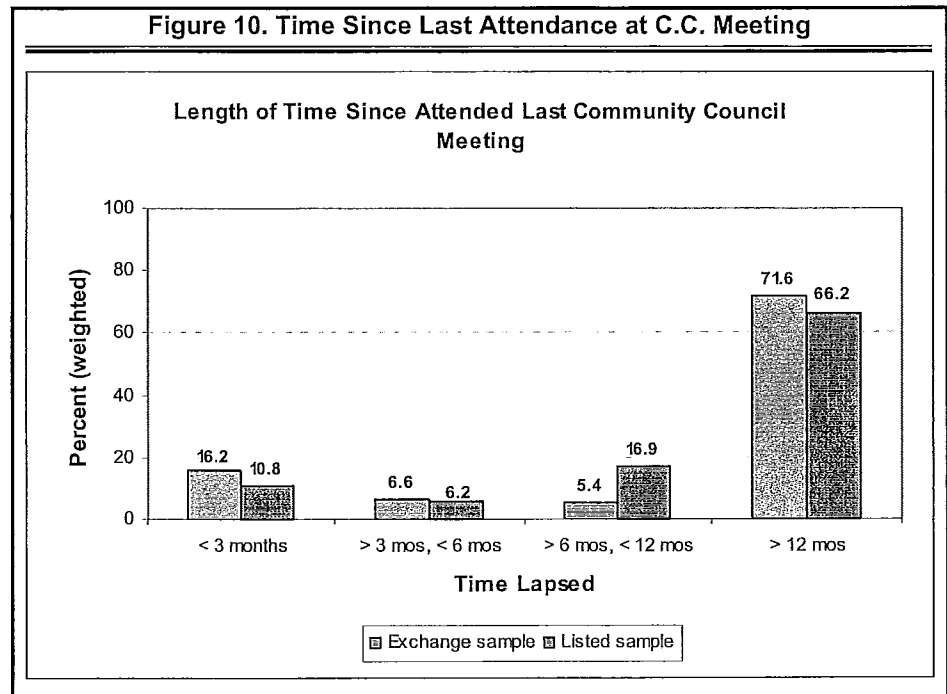
Because of the heavy focus by Alaska’s *PSN* program on outreach through community councils, PSNHS asked respondents about the frequency with which they attend community council meetings.

Interviewers asked participants two questions dealing with the level of their participation in their community council. First, respondents were asked, “Have you ever attended a community council meeting in Anchorage?” If they had, this follow-up question was asked: “How



long ago did you attend a community council meeting?” Only a minority of respondents indicated that they had ever attended an Anchorage community council meeting (Figure 9), and the vast majority of those who had attended did so more than a year before they participated in PSNHS (Figure 10). Because the Alaska *PSN* outreach efforts began in earnest approximately twelve months prior to administration of the survey, in spring 2003, it is likely that the public’s perceptions of gun crime and its consequences were not due to attendance

at a community council meeting where *PSN* representatives were present. The utility of these survey items lies with future iterations of PSNHS. Given the focus of the Alaska *PSN* program on community-level



outreach, a replication of PSNHS will prove valuable in assessing the ability of this strategy to effectively communicate the activities of law enforcement officials, as well as the penalties associated with gun crime.

Attitudes Toward Law Enforcement

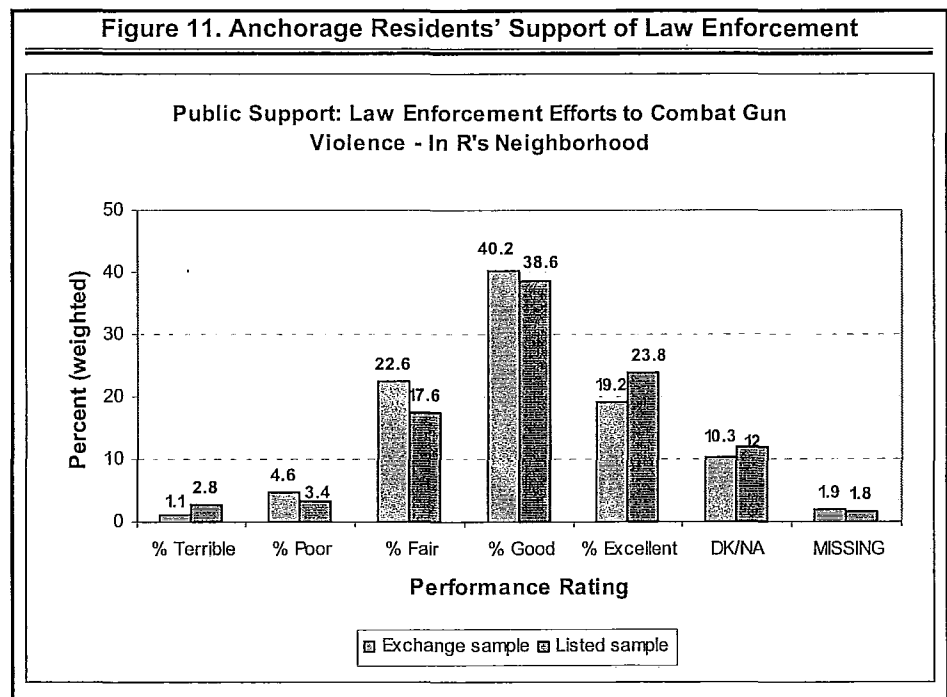
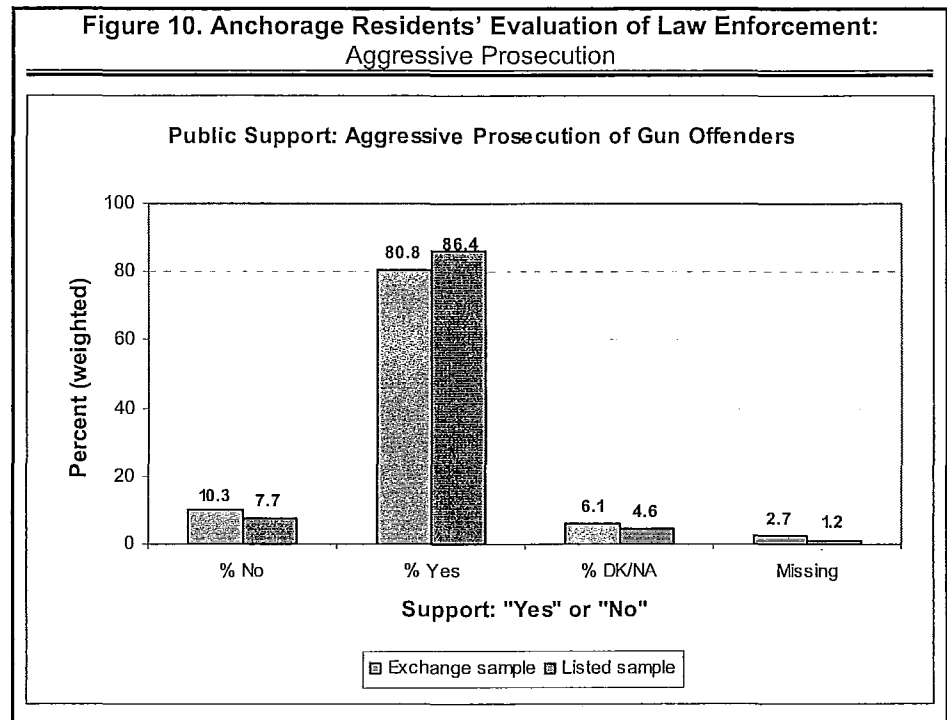
To this point, this report has focused on the public’s overall awareness of the *PSN* initiative, possible sources of information regarding gun crime and law enforcement efforts to control it, and the consequences for committing a gun crime – specifically the offense of illegal possession by convicted felons. We now move on to some measures of public attitudes toward what law enforcement agencies and personnel actually do.

PSNHS included two items gauging public support for law enforcement efforts to respond to gun

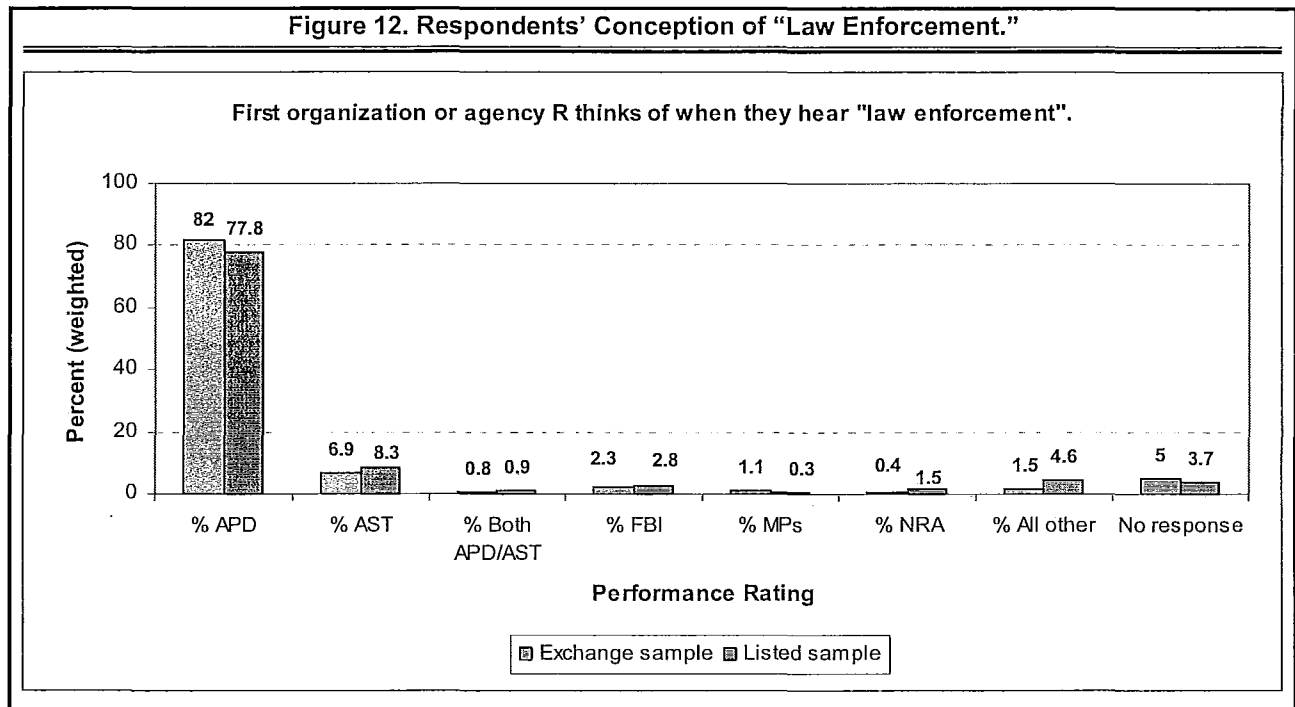
violence. Respondents were asked if they supported aggressive law enforcement. They were also asked to evaluate the efforts of law enforcement in combating gun violence in their neighborhood. These data suggest that Anchorage law enforcement officials have

received a public mandate of sorts to take action against those who use firearms illegally – at least against those who illegally *possess* a gun. Between eighty and ninety percent of Anchorage residents reported that they “support aggressive prosecution of those who get caught possessing a gun and have a prior conviction for a felony crime” (Figure 10).

Moreover, residents seem to be happy with the efforts of law enforcement officials to combat gun violence in their own neighborhoods (Figure 11).



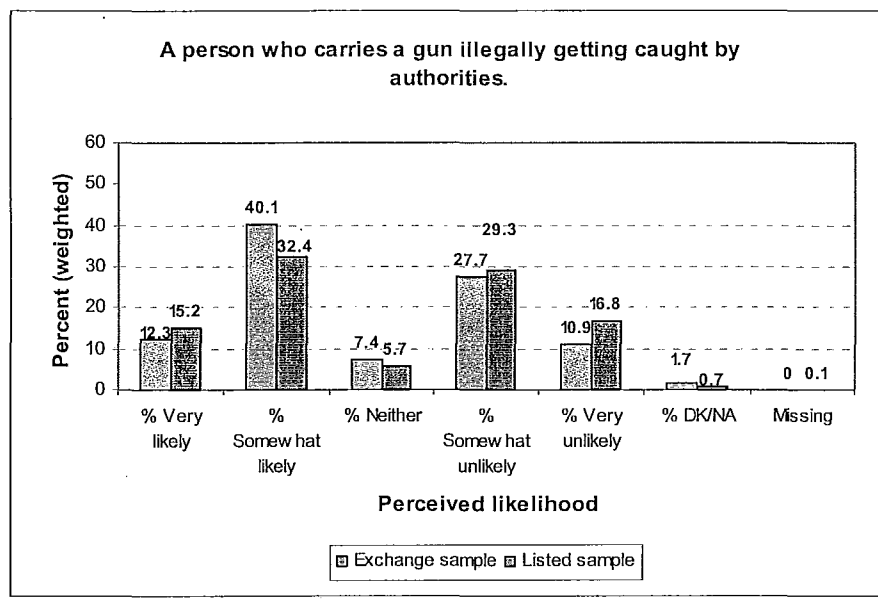
Because respondents had a very specific idea of what was meant by “law enforcement” (i.e., the Anchorage Police Department), this item turned out to be a potent measure of the public’s assessment of *police performance* with respect to neighborhood-level gun violence (Figure 12). In general, even though Anchorage residents are not acutely aware of law enforcement efforts to prevent and control gun violence, they are nevertheless supportive of them.



Collective Deterrence

As part of the effort to establish baseline data for the assessment of *PSN’s* overall effectiveness, PSNHS included a set of survey items designed to measure the general public’s perceptions of legal penalties for gun crimes. This section presents these survey results and a discussion of the survey items. The primary concept used in the analysis is *collective deterrence*. Collective deterrence is understood to mean the shared perceptions of a community with regard to the likelihood of sanctions for criminal or otherwise prohibited behavior. Summary results from the PSNHS for the seven measures constituting collective deterrence are presented below.

**Figure 13. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Sanction Certainty:
Detection**

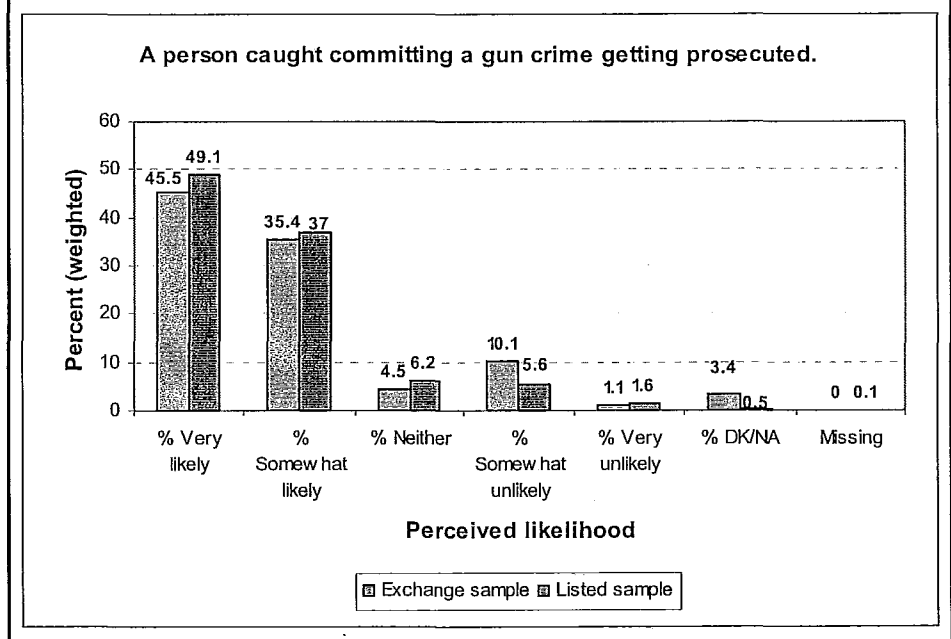


In general, Anchorage residents were ambivalent about the prospects that a person who carries a gun illegally will be caught by police or other persons in positions of legal authority (Figure 13). Approximately half of the sample thought it *very likely* or *somewhat likely*

that detection of illegal gun possession will occur; conversely, about 40 percent thought it *somewhat unlikely* or *very unlikely* to occur. However, when asked about their perceptions of the likelihood of prosecution for those who were caught, better than 8 out of 10 respondents in both samples thought such an outcome would be *very* or *somewhat* likely to occur (Figure 14). Moreover, respondents

demonstrated a strong belief that prosecutions by state and federal officials would result in criminal convictions for those accused. Between 75 and 80 percent of respondents thought it *very* or *somewhat* likely that crimes involving firearms

**Figure 14. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Sanction Certainty:
Prosecution**



which were prosecuted would result in a conviction of some kind (Figure 15 & Figure 16).

Figure 15. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Sanction Certainty:
Conviction, State Court

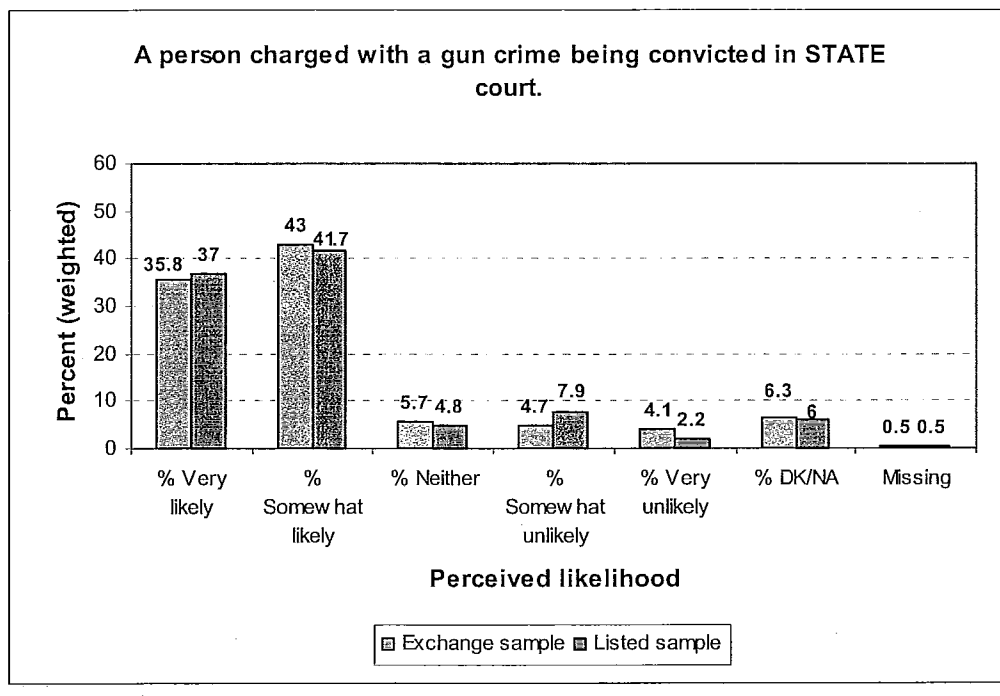
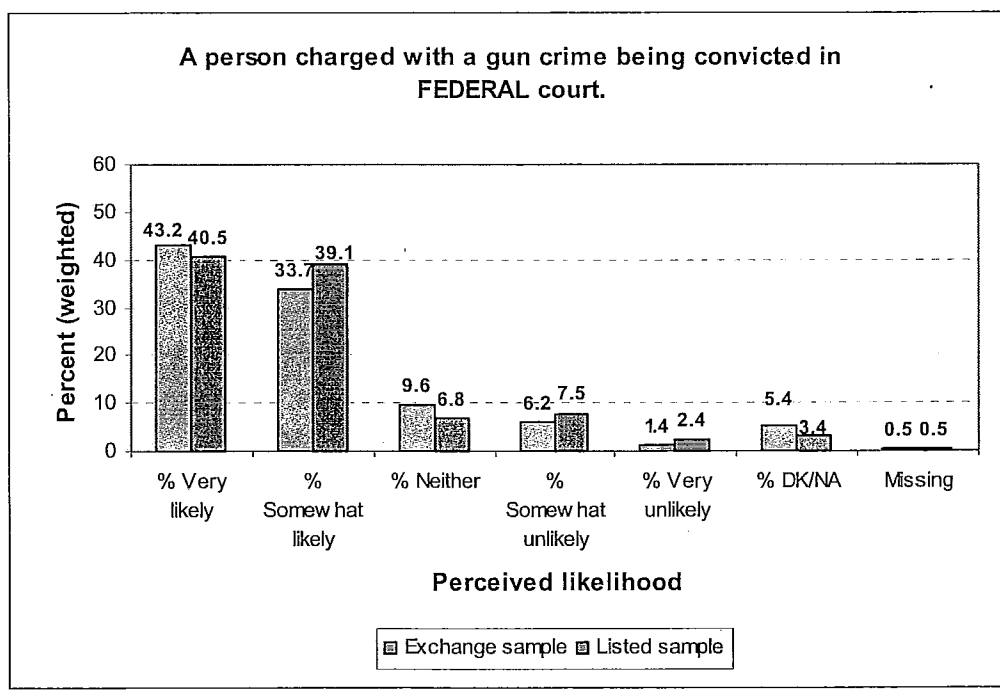


Figure 16. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Sanction Certainty: Conviction,
Federal Court



However, Anchorage residents expressed considerable doubt when asked about the likelihood of a harsh punishment for those convicted of gun crimes. Less than half of both the exchange and listed samples reported that they believed it *very* or

somewhat likely that a person convicted of a gun crime would receive a long prison sentence (Figure 17).

Two additional collective deterrence measures reveal a great deal about the public's perceptions of criminal justice efficacy with respect to gun crime. Respondents were asked about the likelihood of a *swift* prosecution once a person was detected and

apprehended by authorities. Less than half of the exchange sample, and just over half of the listed

Figure 17. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Sanction Certainty & Severity: Sentencing

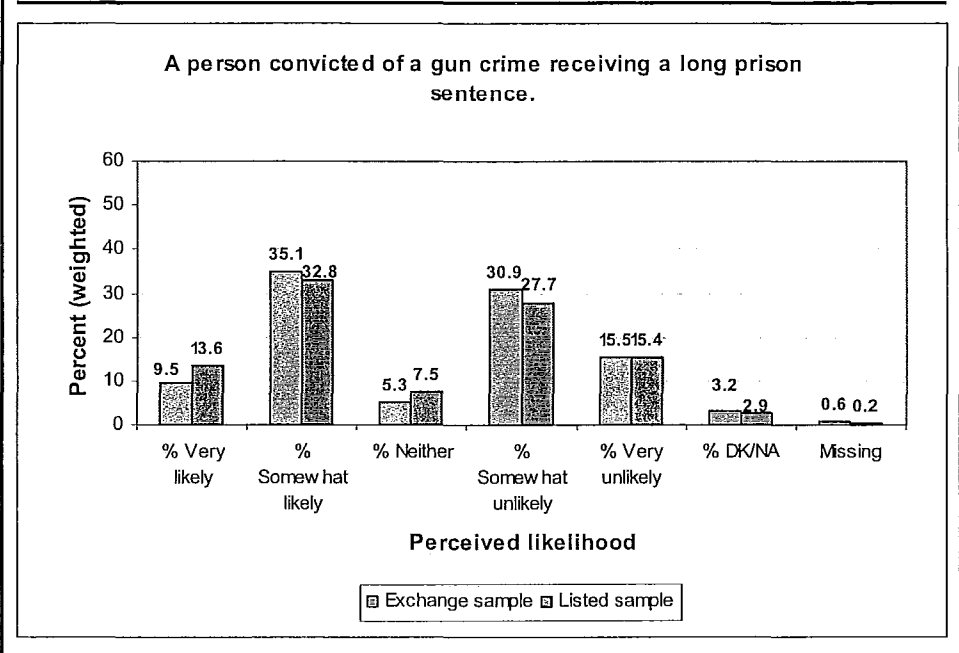
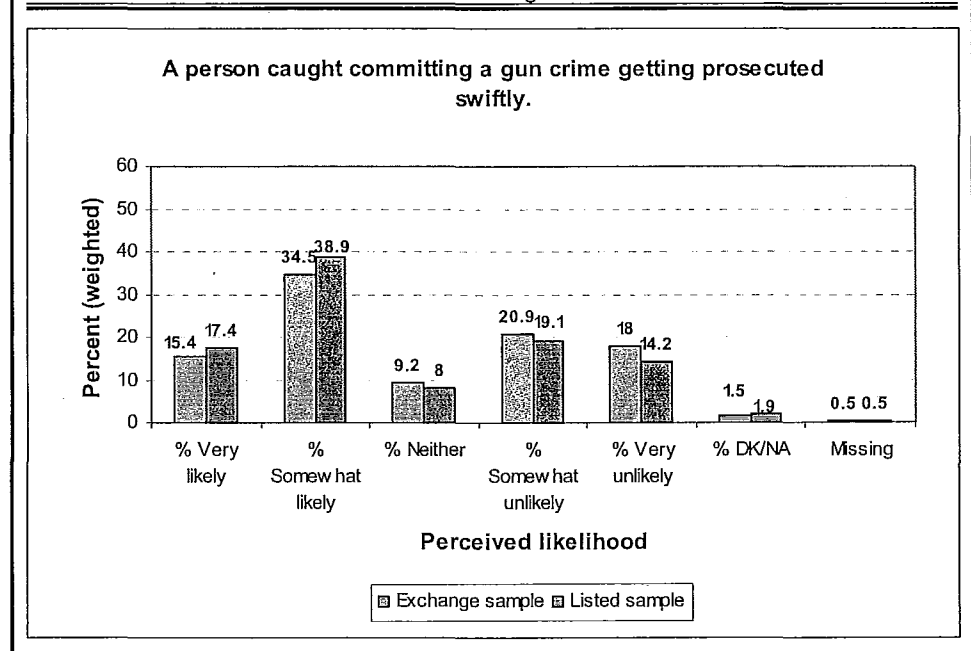
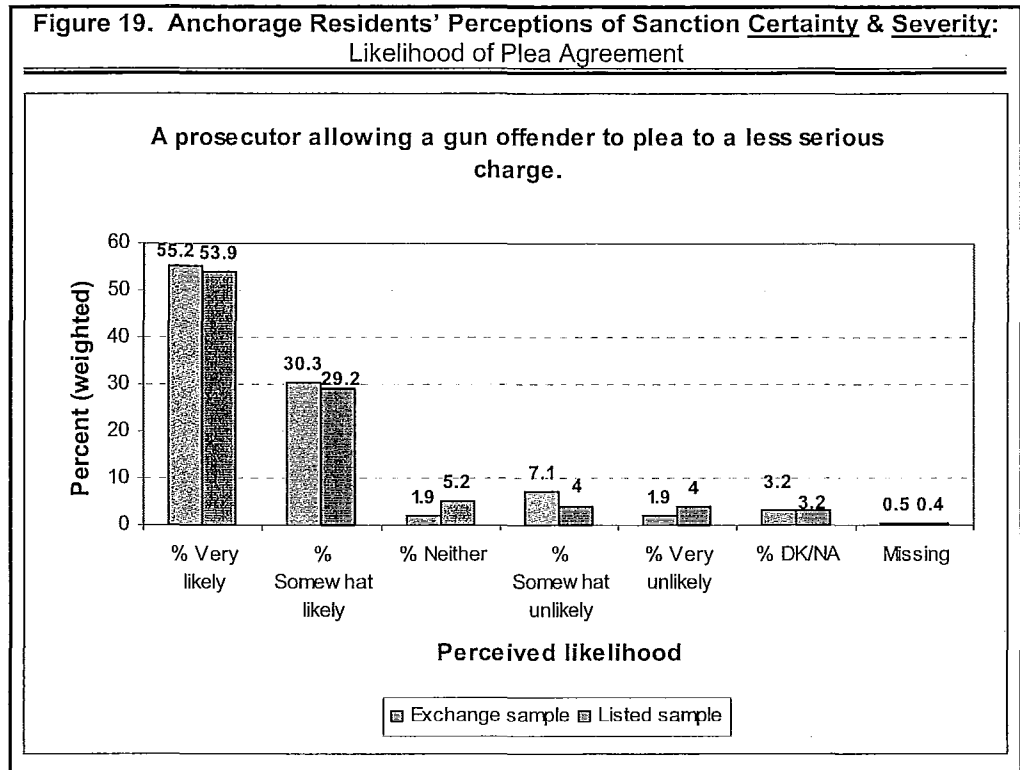


Figure 18. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Sanction Celerity: Swiftiness of Legal Action



sample, stated they believed it was *very likely* or *somewhat likely* for the prosecution of a gun offender to occur in a timely fashion (Figure 18).

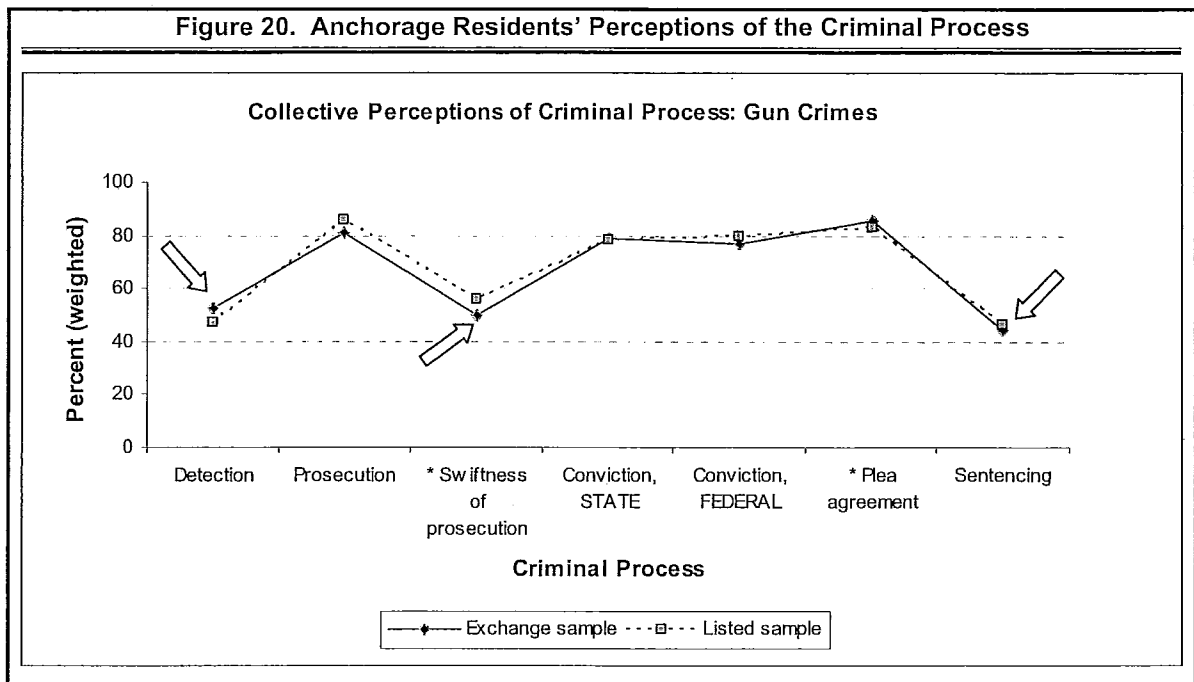
The final
collective deterrence
item measured
respondents'
perceptions of plea
agreements. When
respondents were
asked about the
likelihood of a
prosecutor allowing
a gun offender to



plead guilty to a lesser offense in order to secure a conviction, more than 80 percent in both samples reported that they believed such a plea agreement was *very* or *somewhat* likely to be entered into (Figure 19). This finding suggests that public confidence in conviction is based on an understanding of criminal process where plea agreements play a significant role in obtaining convictions.

Overall, the people of Anchorage have great deal of confidence that law enforcement officials will take actions to sanction gun offenders and enjoy success in the actions they take, *once gun offenders are caught*. These findings can certainly be interpreted as positives in terms of the public's perception of the certainty of criminal sanctions for gun offenses. But, based on an examination of three items measuring the certainty, celerity and severity of sanctions, three of the four factors previously identified for achieving effective deterrence, a similar evaluation cannot be made with respect to the level of collective deterrence among Anchorage residents at this stage of the Alaska *PSN* effort (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of the Criminal Process



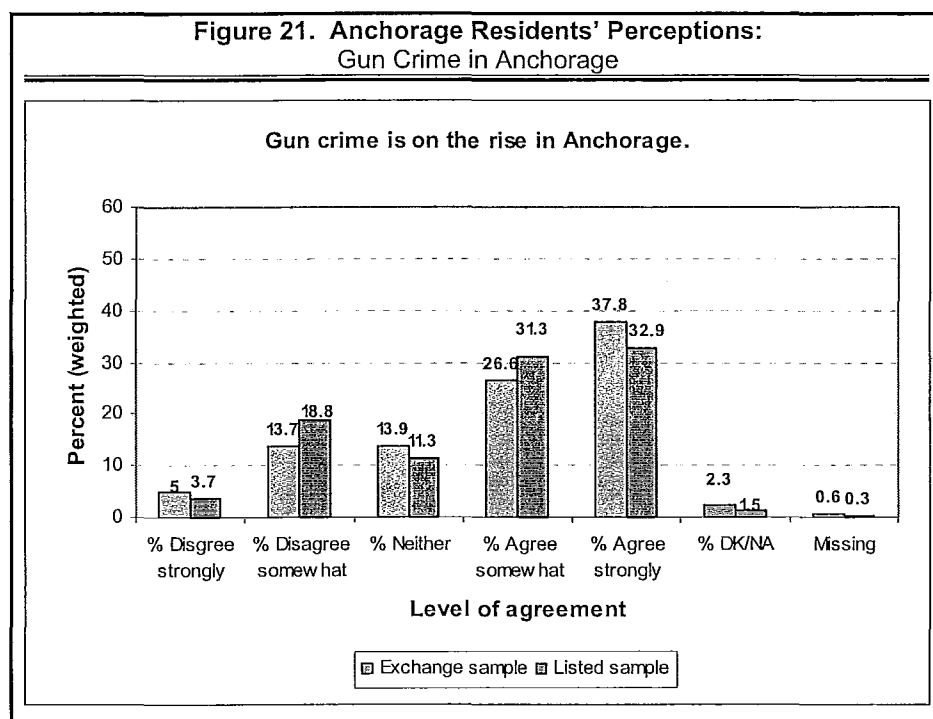
First, in terms of sanction certainty, when it comes to official detection of illegal gun possession, there are almost as many residents who think it is unlikely to occur as there are residents who think it will. Hence, in the aggregate, getting caught is given even odds by Anchorage residents. In addition, Anchorage residents are highly pessimistic about the likelihood of swift legal action once an offender is caught by police or other officials. And finally, respondents put only slightly more stock in the chances a person convicted of a gun crime will be given a long prison sentence. For advocates of criminal deterrence for gun crime, particularly illegal possession, these findings bring little good news. Only a minority of Anchorage residents perceive the three elements of certainty, celerity (swiftness) and severity to be salient (highlighted by arrows in Figure 20).

On top of these findings, even though Anchorage residents think it likely that the criminal prosecution of a gun offender will result in a conviction, they are more likely to report that convictions will come in the form of a plea agreement involving a less serious offense. The implications are that even among those who think there is a good chance of detection for carrying a gun illegally they are not likely to think a severe sanction (long prison sentence) will result, thus largely canceling out much of

any deterrent effect achieved by detection and prosecution. Nevertheless, the news is not all bad. Anchorage residents strongly believe that authorities *will take action* (i.e. prosecution) when gun offenses come to their attention, even if such action is not thought to be swift or severe.

Community Perceptions of Gun Crime and Associated Problems

In addition to formulating a general deterrence strategy, the Alaska *Project Safe Neighborhoods* task force has worked to establish connections between the law enforcement establishment and the people and institutions of local communities. As part of this effort, it was imperative that the Alaska



PSN learn how the public viewed several issues of import to law enforcement – for example: the level of gun crime in Anchorage; the link between gun violence and illegal drugs; and other neighborhood-level problems. The guiding premise in this effort was a desire to

incorporate community concerns into gun violence interventions and prevention strategies. Unlike their perceptions of the criminal process, when it comes to crime and violence involving guns, Anchorage residents express little ambiguity or uncertainty. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents agreed with the statement “gun crime is on the rise in Anchorage,” and better than eight out of ten agreed *strongly* or *somewhat* with the statement “gun violence and illegal drugs are closely linked together” (70 percent agreed *strongly*).

Respondents were also asked to estimate how “big” these particular problems were *in their neighborhood*: violent crime in general; gun violence; youth violence; youth gangs; theft of firearms from people’s homes; and racial/ethnic conflict. Overall,

Anchorage residents did not express overwhelming concern to PSNHS interviewers on any of these issues. Between one-half and two-thirds reported that violent crime was *not a problem at all* in their neighborhood, and only about one in ten said it was a *big* or *very big*

problem (Figure 23). Even less troublesome to Anchorage residents than violent crime in general was the issue of gun violence, the focus of *PSN*’s gun violence reduction efforts.

Figure 22. Anchorage Residents’ Perceptions: Gun violence – Illegal drugs

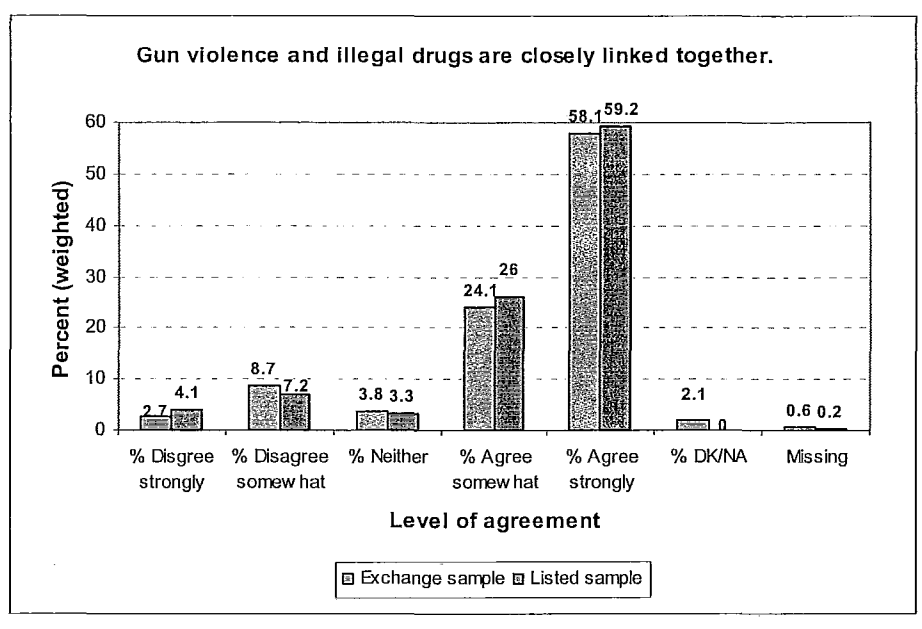
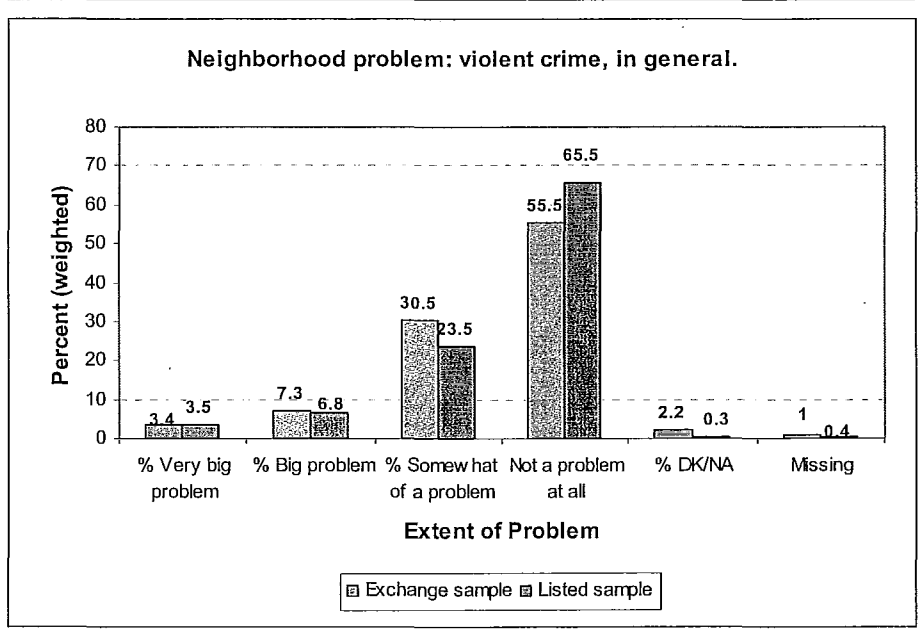


Figure 23. Anchorage Residents’ Perceptions of Neighborhood Problems: Violent Crime, in general



Approximately two-thirds of all respondents stated that gun violence was *not a problem at all* in their neighborhood; as with violent crime in general, about ten percent thought gun violence to be a *big* or *very big* problem. Several high-profile incidents of gun violence involving youthful offenders in

Anchorage in the year preceding PSNHS had prompted a great deal of concern among local politicians, school administrators, public policy officials and other service professionals. However, little was known about the level of concern

among the general public. In an effort to bring lay knowledge into the fold, *PSN* wanted to collect information from the general public on this issue.

The data presented in Figure 25 and Figure 26 highlight how public perceptions and those of criminal justice officials may differ considerably. Whereas justice professionals and other government workers who routinely deal with children note an increasingly troublesome problem with youth violence, the general public overwhelmingly views youth violence (and youth gangs) in their respective neighborhoods as largely inconsequential.

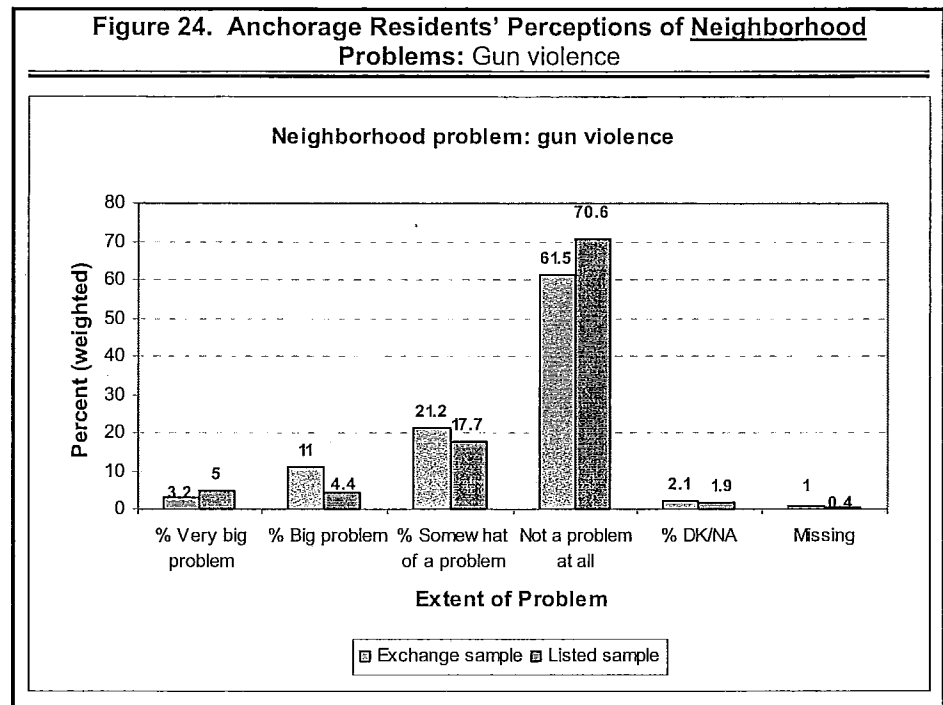


Figure 25. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Neighborhood Problems: Youth violence

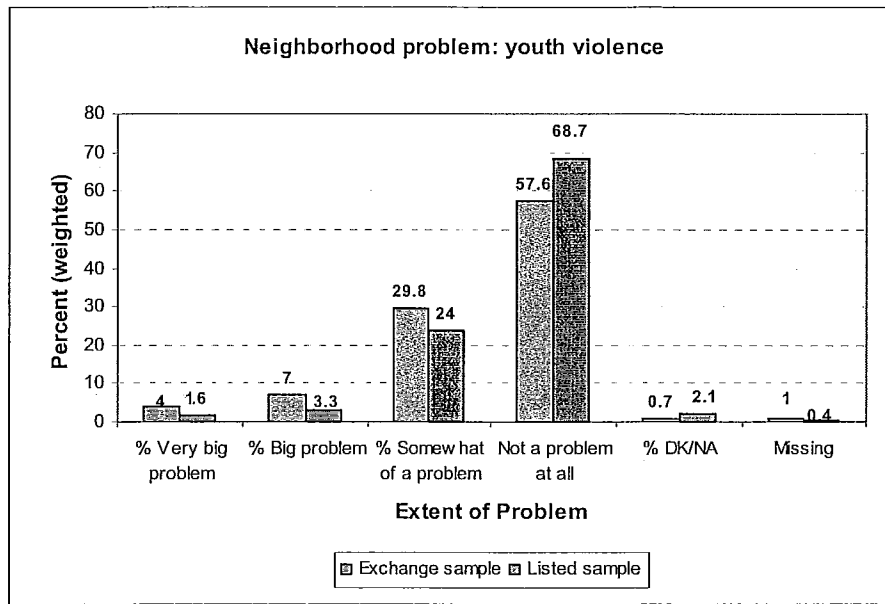
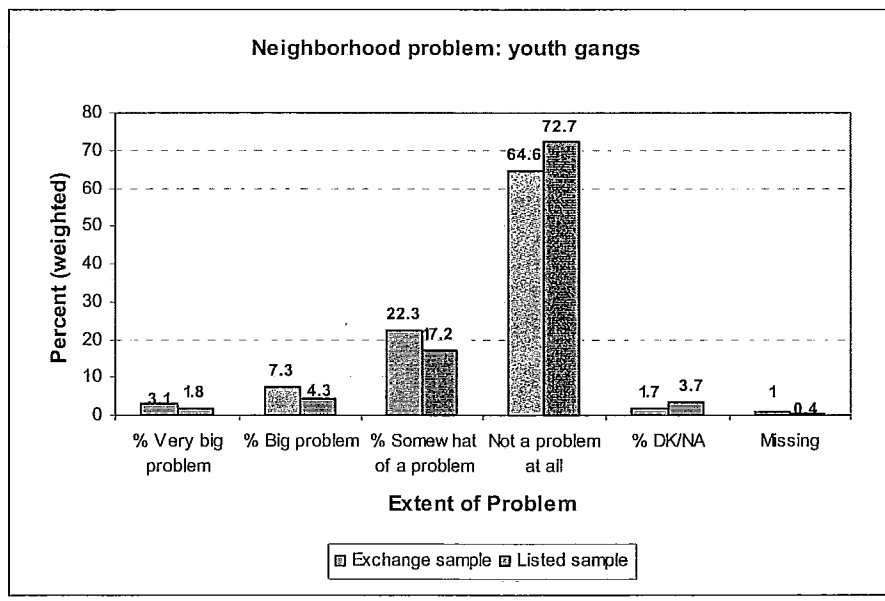
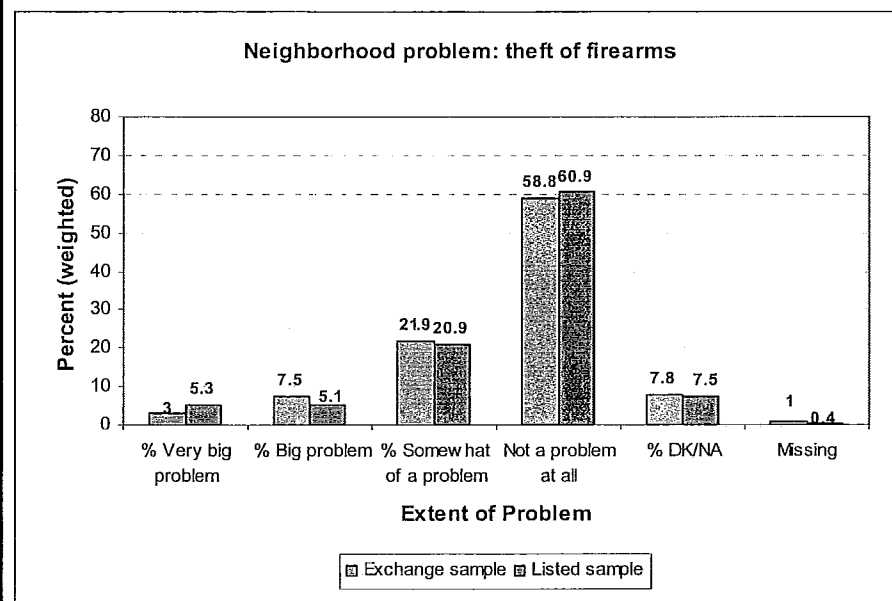


Figure 26. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Neighborhood Problems: Youth gangs



To the extent Anchorage residents perceive any of the issues discussed in this report as a problem in their neighborhood, the theft of firearms appears to be the most significant in that it demonstrates the lowest percentage of respondents

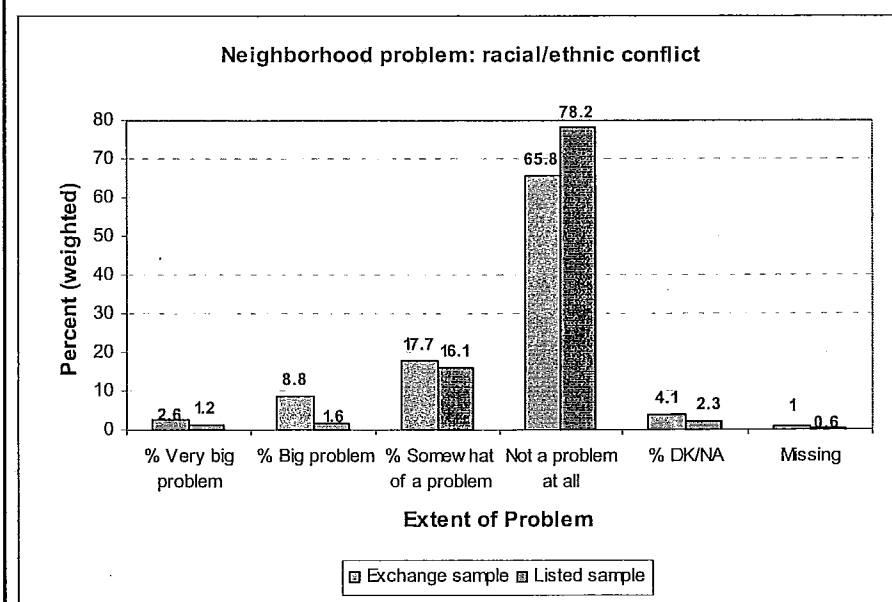
Figure 27. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Neighborhood Problems: Firearm Theft



who said it was *not a problem at all* in their neighborhood (Figure 27). Note, however, that this measure also had the highest percentage of respondents who told interviewers that they *didn't know* how much of a problem firearm theft was in their neighborhood, which suggests that this issue is less salient in the minds of residents than the problems they were asked about.

Finally, the *least* problematic neighborhood issue of the seven presented to respondents was racial/ethnic

Figure 28. Anchorage Residents' Perceptions of Neighborhood Problems: Racial/Ethnic Conflict



conflict. By and large, Anchorage residents do not view conflict between cultural groups as a significant problem. A larger percentage of respondents said culture conflict was *not a problem at all* than for any

other neighborhood problem measure. (Note: these data are pooled across all racial/ethnic categories. Disaggregated data analysis may show that perceptions of culture conflict vary substantially across groups.)

In addition to providing a specific gauge of public perceptions of gun violence, the use of multiple measures of community-level problems allows observers to put residents' perceptions of gun violence in context with other issues. For example, while it is useful to know that a majority of Anchorage residents think gun violence is not a big problem in their neighborhood, it may be even more valuable to know that gun violence is generally viewed as a *lesser* problem than violent crime in general, youth violence and firearm theft, but *more* of a problem than youth gangs and racial/ethnic conflict.

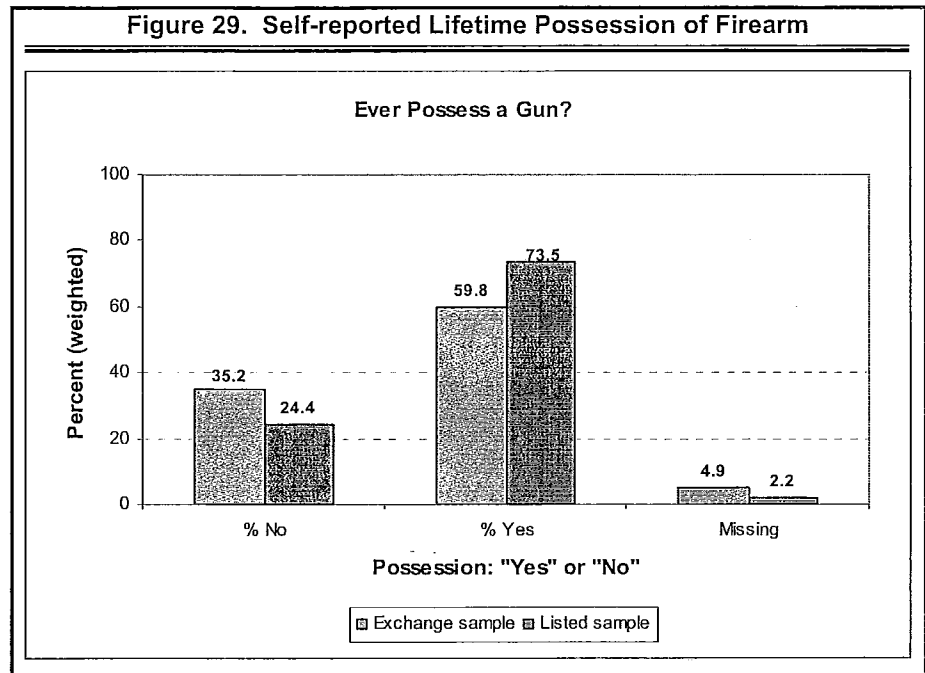
By using two measures of gun violence, one at the neighborhood level (Figure 24) and one at the city level (Figure 21), we can also discern some of the nuance in people's perceptions of crime. Most Anchorage residents perceive gun crime to be on the rise in Anchorage – just not in *their* neighborhood. Recall that approximately two-thirds of Anchorage residents agreed *somewhat* or *strongly* with the statement “gun crime is on the rise in Anchorage.” However, when asked about how much of a problem gun violence is in their own neighborhood, respondents overwhelmingly reported *not a problem at all*.

Lifetime Prevalence of Firearm Possession

Of course, the efforts of the PSN initiative in Alaska and elsewhere are directed at those who are likely to possess firearms at some point in the future. While it is not possible to know with certainty who will possess and use a gun in the future, it is probable that those who have possessed a gun in the past are the most likely to do so again. PSNHS presented survey respondents with this question: “Have you ever possessed a gun, whether you owned it, borrowed it, shared it with someone, were keeping it for someone, or got it in any other way? Do not include BB guns or air rifles.”

Probably not surprising to Alaskans who have resided in the state for more than a year or two, is the finding that between 60 and 70 percent of Anchorage residents stated they had possessed a gun at some time in their life. The percentage is probably even higher outside of Alaska's largest city,

particularly in the bush where subsistence hunting is very prevalent. Regardless of whatever differences may exist between different areas of the state, the bottom line is that most Alaskans have at one time or another had a gun in their possession. (So much so, in fact, that not having possessed a gun might be considered deviant.)



Readers should make a note that this measure does not ask people if they *owned* a gun, although ownership would certainly imply possession; rather, the question simply asks if a person has possessed a gun in some way. This distinction is important for a couple reasons. First, a measure of gun possession is a more inclusive indicator of *exposure* to firearms. Second, measures of possession provide an upper limit for gun ownership. Since a person can possess a gun without owning it, but not own a gun without possessing it, the count of gun possessions will always exceed that of ownership. A third reason has to do with policy interventions designed to reduce the level of gun violence. Research shows that a significant portion of gun violence, particularly among juvenile populations, is *not* committed with firearms *owned* by either the perpetrator or victim. There are two primary reasons for this factual curiosity: 1) most gun violence in the United States is committed with handguns, not rifles or shotguns, which juveniles are not permitted to own or purchase; and 2) for juveniles and prohibited persons (convicted felons mentally ill persons, and others) legal prohibitions keep them from owning or purchasing firearms at all. Therefore, policymakers must not place too heavy an emphasis on ownership *per se*. That being said, readers should be made aware that rates of gun ownership are nonetheless

important in understanding the etiology of gun crime and gun violence (for example as an indicator of gun *availability* in jurisdictions where gun theft is a problem).

NOTABLE ABSENCES

Despite the comprehensiveness of the PSNHS data set, resource limitations forced a research design and method which did not permit all populations of interest to be interviewed, or all relevant variables to be operationalized. Two populations of particular interest to Alaska's *PSN* initiative are school-age youth (12 to 19 years of age) and people who have recently experienced the sanctions of the criminal justice system (both juveniles and adults). Separate studies by the task force (not presented here) show these two groups to be disproportionately represented among those who commit gun crimes. This suggests that strategic interventions designed specifically for them might prove to be particularly efficacious, and therefore necessitates focused study of their perceptions of criminal sanctions for gun crime and awareness of law enforcement efforts to control gun violence in Anchorage. As a general population survey, PSNHS allows for an analysis of perceptions by age, but any such analysis is limited by small samples size for school-age youth. There are no measures of criminal justice system exposure to assess the influence of previous legal sanctions on perceptions and awareness. Future studies by the Alaska *PSN* task force into the perceptions of criminal sanctions, awareness of law enforcement efforts to control gun crime, as well as perceptions of community-level problems should, if possible, take direct aim at one or both of these groups.

Also missing from PSNHS are affective measures tapping the emotional and evaluative aspects of gun crime among Anchorage residents. For instance, the present study does not include any items documenting the extent to which gun crime makes residents fearful or apprehensive. In addition, the survey did not incorporate any measures of disapproval for different types of gun offenses to help contextualize public support for enhanced prosecution and other strategies of the *PSN* initiative.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to establish baseline measures of Anchorage residents' awareness and perceptions of the Alaska *PSN* initiative and to learn about public safety concerns at the neighborhood level. Results show that a year and a half into Alaska's *PSN* initiative, Anchorage residents were more aware of the specific penalties under federal law for illegal possession of a firearm than the programmatic efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement officials to reduce the level of gun crime in the city. Despite efforts to "get the word out" through local media and community outreach, relatively few respondents recognized either of the *PSN* slogans or the *Hard Time for Gun Crime* message disseminated by *PSN*. That being said, knowledge of the *PSN* initiative and the deterrent message *did* reach some; future efforts might build on this foundation.

Analysis of an index of "collective deterrence" measures reveals that Anchorage residents do not perceive much disincentive for engaging in prohibited conduct with weapons. Half of the sample thought it *somewhat* or *very* likely that a person would be detected for illegal possession of a gun; only slightly fewer thought it unlikely. Overall, Anchorage residents do think a prosecution will take place *if* a person is caught committing a gun crime, but the vast majority doubt prosecution will happen quickly and nearly the same percentage think a conviction will be the result of a plea agreement to a lesser charge. Finally, respondents conveyed in a strong way their perception that a person convicted of a gun crime would not receive a long prison sentence (presumably due to their perception that convictions will be the product of a plea agreement). In short, the data suggest that, at best, there is a low level of deterrence preventing people from committing gun crimes, particularly illegal possession offenses, among the general population.

In terms of Anchorage residents' perceptions of crime problems in the city and in their respective neighborhoods, findings from PSNHS show there to be little community concern about violent crimes (general and gun-related), youth misbehavior or racial/ethnic conflict *at the neighborhood level*. However, when asked if they thought gun crime was on the rise in Anchorage as whole, a majority of

the sample told interviewers it was, suggesting a halo effect whereby residents deny the possibility of serious social dislocations in their own neighborhood and project them onto other areas in the city. Future analyses of PSNHS data will examine in greater detail the patterns of response across Anchorage neighborhoods.

As an effort to establish baseline information, PSNHS was not intended, nor was it designed, as a stand-alone evaluative instrument. Even so, it provides a great deal of information useful for what might be termed a “mid-term grade” which can serve as an aid in directing the future activities of Alaska’s *PSN* effort. That is, the findings presented here should not be read as the final assessment of the program, or as an attack on what has been done so far; rather, readers of this report should view these data as feedback for deciding what strategies are working, and which require one or two adjustments. More definitive conclusions will be reached upon conclusion of the second iteration of PSNHS, when the baseline measures established here can be compared with a second set of findings.

APPENDIX A

PSNHS METHODOLOGY

PSNHS was conducted via telephone utilizing Sawtooth's *WinCATI* (v. 4.1) computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software. CATI software provides survey researchers with a comprehensive phone number management system for sampling, dialing, number management, interviewing and analyzing survey questionnaires.

Two samples of phone numbers were used for PSNHS. The first sample consisted of numbers randomly generated by computer, based on all eligible numbers within Anchorage's designated phone exchanges. A telephone exchange is designated by the three digits of a ten-digit phone number following the area code (e.g., 907-555-5555). The PSNHS telephone number sample included phone numbers within each Anchorage exchange through a random selection process; a designated number of phone numbers ($n = 969$) were then selected for dialing from this sampling frame.

The second sample of phone numbers consisted of seven-digit numbers randomly selected from a list of all published (listed) residential phone numbers in the municipality of Anchorage. A sampling frame of residential phone numbers was constructed from publicly available telephone number listings, such as telephone books. A total of 917 residential phone numbers were included in this sample.

Sampled phone numbers were uploaded into a *WinCATI* database, housed on a centralized network server. Interviewers administered the survey from computerized workstations connected to the CATI server. Software loaded onto each workstation randomly selected phone numbers from the CATI server for dialing by interviewers. Calling took place between the hours of 6pm and 9pm Monday through Friday, and 10am through 6pm on Saturday and Sunday. This strategy was employed because previous telephonic surveys conducted by the Justice Center showed that calling during daytime hours (9am – 6pm) resulted in over-sampling of particular social groups (particularly women over the age of 50 in households with higher than average incomes). In order to maximize the rate of response, numbers

were removed from the sample only after every effort was made to secure a completed interview. The following parameters were put in place for removing numbers from the sample:

- At least one completed interview
- Respondent requested removal from sample
- No English-speaking household residents
- Number out of service (disconnected)
- Three consecutive fax tones
- Number determined to be a business phone
- Number dialed 10 times without completed interview

Busy signals, answering machines and instances where there was no answer were re-dialed after an interval of several hours. When a juvenile under the age of 18 answered, interviewers immediately asked to speak to an adult resident of the household. If no adult residents were present at the time of the call, interviewers scheduled a call-back. Those aged 12 to 17 were interviewed by PSNHS staff only after parental/guardian consent. Interviewers attempted to convert initial refusals and were successful in a significant percentage of cases. All refusals were returned to the sample for re-dialing in three days (or at a specific time requested by respondent) unless the respondent requested removal from the sampling frame, subject to the parameters listed above. Quite often, refusals were not “refusals” in the sense that a participant didn’t *want* to participate at all; rather, quite often non-participation was purely a matter of scheduling. Interviewers scheduled call-backs for days and times more convenient for the respondent.

On average, the interview took 7 minutes to complete. A total of 585 interviews were completed, 261 from the exchange sample and 324 from the listed sample. Response rates differed between the two samples. The exchange sample produced at least one completed interview 35 percent of the time, while at least one completed interview was conducted in 46 percent of cases for the listed sample. Interviewers were able to secure two interviews within the same household on 34 occasions (18 for the exchange sample; 16 for the listed sample); there were no instances where a PSNHS interviewer was able to get three interviews from a single household.

APPENDIX B

PSNHS SAMPLE

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the basic demographic variables included in the two PSNHS samples, alongside U.S. Census 2000 data for purposes of comparison. This table shows that the two PSNHS samples are highly representative of the general Anchorage population. None of the observed differences presented in Table 1 were found to be statistically significant. Nevertheless, there are some noticeable differences between the PSNHS samples and the Anchorage population that require discussion.

The largest differences are found in the three social variables included in PSNHS: education, individual income, and work status. In terms of education, PSNHS undersampled those on the lower end of the spectrum – those who have a 12th grade education or less. The survey also under-represented those with annual incomes of less than \$40,000. And, PSNHS did not capture a representative proportion of people who were unemployed. In sum, those who fall into the lower socio-economic strata in Anchorage were not well represented in the PSNHS sample. Before addressing possible explanations for these distribution problems, we compare both PSNHS samples to census data across three ascriptive variables: gender, race/ethnicity, and age.

Both PSNHS samples were representative of the underlying gender distribution of Anchorage. The survey samples replicate the distribution from the 2000 census almost perfectly. The racial distributions of the two PSNHS samples also closely mirror the census distribution. However, while the overall percent distribution was highly representative of the general Anchorage population, numbers of racial minorities included in the survey were small. The only significant difference between our samples and the census across these three ascriptive variables occurs for age, and the difference is found in two age categories: 12 to 17 year olds and 18 -19 year olds. PSNHS undersampled residents from these age groups.

This shortcoming in the PSNHS samples helps us understand, in part, the other problems with the sampling distributions – particularly individual income and work-status. Youth between the ages of 16 and 19, most of whom are still in high school, are likely to be unemployed or working part-time – the two work status categories found to be undersampled by PSNHS. If they have a job, not only is it likely to be part-time, but it is also probably a low-level position in the service sector such as a server at your local fast-food restaurant, which probably pays minimum wage (or less). On top of that, earning power is indirectly related to age through experience and tenure – neither of which teenagers possess. All this helps us understand the problem with individual income distribution witnessed in the PSNHS samples. To the degree the sample excluded that group most likely to be unemployed or employed only part-time, in positions with low salaries, the income distribution will be skewed upward. The problem with the distribution of educational attainment is not as easily explained because the comparison made is only for those aged 25 or older.

In order to correct for these shortcomings, age and employment status information were gathered from the 2000 and used to construct sample weights. Sample weights are a statistical procedure used to correct for sample bias, whereby each case is assigned a value (a “weight”) calculated by dividing the population value for a particular variable by the sample value for the same variable. Table 2a and 2b detail the calculation of the PSNHS sample weights. To illustrate how a sample weight is calculated, consider the percentage of Anchorage residents age 16 to 19 who were employed in 1999 (4.9%), and the percentage of PSNHS exchange sample respondents who reported being employed (0.5%). The sample weight assigned to each PSNHS exchange sample respondent between the ages of 16 and 19 was $.049 / .005 = 9.8$ (see value in column third from left in Table 2a). The last two columns in Table 2a and Table 2b show how the sample weights impact each of the distributions across these two dimensions. Tables 3a and 3b detail the effect of the weighted samples for each of the six demographic variables first discussed in Table 1. By weighting each of the samples, the differences between each of them and the

underlying population characteristics detailed by the 2000 census data are reduced, making findings from PSNHS, already highly representative of the Anchorage population age 12 or older, even more so.

**Table 1. PSNHS Sample Distribution Comparison:
Census vs. "Exchange" vs. "Listed" Samples (unweighted)**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	DATA SOURCE					
	Census 2000		Exchange Sample		Listed Sample	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age						
12 – 17 yrs	24,981	11.9	4	1.5	5	1.5
18 – 19 yrs	7,073	3.4	2	0.7	4	1.2
20 – 24 yrs	17,641	8.4	28	10.7	13	4.0
25 – 29 yrs	19,703	9.4	24	9.2	18	5.6
30 – 34 yrs	20,361	9.7	31	11.9	30	9.3
35 – 44 yrs	49,143	23.4	70	26.8	63	19.4
45 – 54 yrs	38,858	18.5	53	20.3	93	28.7
55 – 64 yrs	18,084	8.6	35	13.4	69	21.3
65+ yrs	13,854	6.6	14	5.4	29	8.9
Missing/Unknown	---	---	0	---	0	---
Total	209,698	100	261	100	324	100
Gender (18+ yrs)						
Male	92,953	50.3	124	48.3	162	50.8
Female	91,959	49.7	126	49.0	152	47.7
Missing/Unknown	---	---	7	2.7	5	1.5
Total	184,912	100	257	100	319	100
Race (18+ yrs)						
Alaska Native/American	12,516	7.0	12	4.7	9	2.8
Indian	10,192	5.8	3	1.2	6	1.9
Asian	10,065	5.7	10	3.9	6	1.9
Pacific Islander	1,361	0.7	5	1.9	2	0.6
White/Caucasian	139,523	78.7	200	77.8	260	81.5
Other	3,715	2.1	15	5.8	23	7.2
Missing/Unknown	---	---	12	4.7	13	4.1
Total	177,372	100	257	100	319	100
Education (25+ yrs)						
HS or GED	38,741	24.2	47	20.7	58	19.2
Vocational/trade school	---	---	10	4.4	11	3.6
Some college/associate	59,428	37.2	73	32.2	91	30.1
/professional degree	46,240	28.9	87	38.3	131	43.4
Four-year degree or higher	15,522	9.7	0	0	3	1.0
No degree	---	---	10	4.4	8	2.7
Missing/Unknown	---	---	10	4.4	8	2.7
Total	159,931	100	227	100	302	100
Individual income (16+ yrs)						
Less than \$12k ¹	36,260	23.3	38	14.7	32	10.0
At least \$12k, but < \$25k	32,511	20.9	31	12.0	35	10.9
At least \$25k, but < \$40k	36,328	23.4	45	17.4	48	15.0
At least \$40k, but < \$75k	38,043	24.5	72	27.8	101	31.6
\$75k or more	12,323	7.9	29	11.2	59	18.4
Missing/Unknown	---	---	44	17.0	45	14.1
Total	155,465	100	259	100	320	100
Work status² (16+ yrs)						
Full-time (35+ hrs/wk)	127,229	66.0	171	72.8	196	69.2
Part-time (< 35 hrs/wk)	28,348	14.7	23	9.8	41	14.5
Did not work/Unemployed ³	37,205	19.3	32	13.6	31	10.9
Missing/Unknown	---	---	9	3.8	15	5.3
Total	192,782	100	235	100	283	100

¹ Census category: < \$12,500.

² Census measure = past year (1999) / PSNHS measure = "current work status." Census work status values based on sample data.

³ Respondents who reported themselves "retired" without also indicating other full-time or part-time employment, and those who reported themselves to be "disabled for work," are excluded in PSNHS unemployment calculations since they are not considered eligible members of the workforce.

**Table 2a. PSNHS Age x Employment Status:
Census 2000 v. "Exchange" Sample (unweighted and weighted)**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	DATA SOURCE						
	Census 2000		Exchange Sample		Sample Weight	Weighted Sample	
	N	%	N	%		N	%
Age - Employed							
16 - 19 yrs	6,129	4.9	1	0.5	9.800	10	5.3
20 - 24 yrs	10,767	8.6	24	12.5	0.688	17	8.9
25 - 29 yrs	13,588	10.8	14	7.3	1.479	21	11.1
30 - 34 yrs	14,413	11.5	26	13.5	0.851	22	11.6
35 - 44 yrs	36,715	29.2	58	30.2	0.966	56	29.5
45 - 54 yrs	30,911	24.6	40	20.8	1.182	47	24.7
55 - 64 yrs	11,100	8.8	29	15.1	0.582	17	8.9
65+ yrs	2,114	1.7	0	---	0	0	---
Total	125,737	100	192	100		190	100
Age - Unemployed¹							
16 - 19 yrs	1,435	15.9	3	5.8	2.741	8	16.0
20 - 24 yrs	1,430	15.8	4	7.7	2.051	8	16.0
25 - 29 yrs	913	10.1	10	19.2	0.526	5	10.0
30 - 34 yrs	951	10.5	5	9.6	1.093	5	10.0
35 - 44 yrs	2,207	24.4	12	23.1	1.056	13	26.0
45 - 54 yrs	1,430	15.8	12	23.1	0.683	8	16.0
55 - 64 yrs	591	6.5	2	3.8	1.710	3	6.0
65+ yrs	89	0.9	4	7.7	0.116	0	---
Total	9,046	100	52	100		50	100

¹ Respondents who reported themselves "retired" without also indicating other full-time or part-time employment, and those who reported themselves to be "disabled for work." are excluded in PSNHS sample weight calculations since they are not considered eligible members of the workforce.

¹ Respondents who reported themselves "retired" without also indicating other full-time or part-time employment, and those who reported themselves to be "disabled for work," are excluded in PSNHS sample weight calculations since they are not considered eligible members of the workforce.

**Table 2b. PSNHS Age x Employment Status:
Census 2000 v. "Listed" Sample (unweighted and weighted)**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	DATA SOURCE						
	Census 2000		Listed Sample		Sample Weight	Weighted Sample	
	N	%	N	%		N	%
Age - Employed							
16 - 19 yrs	6,129	4.9	2	0.8	6.125	12	5.2
20 - 24 yrs	10,767	8.6	10	4.3	2.000	20	8.7
25 - 29 yrs	13,588	10.8	12	5.2	2.076	25	10.8
30 - 34 yrs	14,413	11.5	25	10.9	1.055	26	11.3
35 - 44 yrs	36,715	29.2	49	21.3	1.370	67	29.0
45 - 54 yrs	30,911	24.6	78	33.9	0.725	57	24.7
55 - 64 yrs	11,100	8.8	46	20.0	0.440	20	8.7
65+ yrs	2,114	1.7	8	3.5	0.485	4	1.7
Total	125,737	100	230	100		231	100
Age - Unemployed ¹							
16 - 19 yrs	1,435	15.9	3	5.8	2.741	8	16.0
20 - 24 yrs	1,430	15.8	3	5.8	2.724	8	16.0
25 - 29 yrs	913	10.1	6	11.5	0.878	5	10.0
30 - 34 yrs	951	10.5	4	7.7	1.363	5	10.0
35 - 44 yrs	2,207	24.4	13	25.0	0.976	13	26.0
45 - 54 yrs	1,430	15.8	12	23.1	0.683	8	16.0
55 - 64 yrs	591	6.5	9	17.3	0.375	3	6.0
65+ yrs	89	0.9	2	3.8	0.236	0	---
Total	9,046	100	52	100		50	100

¹ Respondents who reported themselves "retired" without also indicating other full-time or part-time employment, and those who reported themselves to be "disabled for work," are excluded in PSNHS sample weight calculations since they are not considered eligible members of the workforce.

**Table 3a. PSNHS Demographic Comparison:
Census 2000 vs. "Exchange" Sample (unweighted and weighted)**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	Census 2000		DATA SOURCE			
	N	%	Exchange Sample		Weighted Sample	
Age			N	%	N	%
12 – 17 yrs	24,981	11.9	4	1.5	6	2.5
18 – 19 yrs	7,073	3.4	2	0.7	12	5.0
20 – 24 yrs	17,641	8.4	28	10.7	24	10.0
25 – 29 yrs	19,703	9.4	24	9.2	26	10.8
30 – 34 yrs	20,361	9.7	31	11.9	28	11.7
35 – 44 yrs	49,143	23.4	70	26.8	70	29.2
45 – 54 yrs	38,858	18.5	53	20.3	54	22.5
55 – 64 yrs	18,084	8.6	35	13.4	20	8.3
65+ yrs	13,854	6.6	14	5.4	0	0
Missing/Unknown	---	---	---	---	0	0
Total	209,698	100	261	100	240	100
Gender (18+ yrs)						
Male	92,953	50.3	124	48.3	121	51.6
Female	91,959	49.7	126	49.0	111	47.2
Missing/Unknown	---	---	7	2.7	3	1.2
Total	184,912	100	257	100	235	100
Race (18+ yrs)						
Alaska Native/American Indian	12,516	7.0	12	4.7	11	4.7
Asian	10,192	5.8	3	1.2	12	5.0
Black/African American	10,065	5.7	10	3.9	7	3.2
Pacific Islander	1,361	0.7	5	1.9	4	1.7
White/Caucasian	139,523	78.7	200	77.8	181	76.8
Other	3,715	2.1	15	5.8	14	5.8
Missing/Unknown	---	---	12	4.7	6	2.8
Total	177,372	100	257	100	235	100
Education (25+ yrs)						
HS or GED	38,741	24.2	47	20.7	39	19.6
Vocational/trade school	---	---	10	4.4	9	4.4
Some college/associate /professional degree	59,428	37.2	73	32.2	67	33.9
Four-year degree or higher	46,240	28.9	87	38.3	78	39.5
No degree	15,522	9.7	0	0	0	0
Missing/Unknown	---	---	10	4.4	5	2.5
Total	159,931	100	227	100	198	100
Individual income (16+ yrs)						
Less than \$12k ¹	36,260	23.3	38	14.7	46	18.9
At least \$12k, but < \$25k	32,511	20.9	31	12.0	29	12.2
At least \$25k, but < \$40k	36,328	23.4	45	17.4	42	17.3
At least \$40k, but < \$75k	38,043	24.5	72	27.8	68	28.2
\$75k or more	12,323	7.9	29	11.2	24	10.0
Missing/Unknown	---	---	44	17.0	32	13.3
Total	155,465	100	259	100	241	100
Work status² (16+ yrs)						
Full-time (35+ hrs/wk)	127,229	66.0	171	72.8	163	69.7
Part-time (< 35 hrs/wk)	28,348	14.7	23	9.8	30	12.8
Did not work/Unemployed ³	37,205	19.3	32	13.6	37	15.8
Missing/Unknown	---	---	9	3.8	4	1.7
Total	192,782	100	235	100	234	100

¹ Census category: < \$12,500.

² Census measure = past year (1999) ; PSNHS measure = "current work status."

³ Respondents who reported themselves "retired" without also indicating other full-time or part-time employment, and those who reported themselves to be "disabled for work," are excluded in PSNHS unemployment calculations since they are not considered eligible members of the workforce.

**Table 3b. PSNHS Demographic Comparison:
Census 2000 vs. "Listed" Sample (unweighted and weighted)**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	DATA SOURCE					
	Census 2000 ¹		Listed Sample		Weighted Sample	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age						
12 – 17 yrs	24,981	11.9	5	1.5	3	1.1
18 – 19 yrs	7,073	3.4	4	1.2	18	6.5
20 – 24 yrs	17,641	8.4	13	4.0	28	10.1
25 – 29 yrs	19,703	9.4	18	5.5	30	10.8
30 – 34 yrs	20,361	9.7	30	9.2	31	11.2
35 – 44 yrs	49,143	23.4	63	19.4	77	27.7
45 – 54 yrs	38,858	18.5	93	28.6	63	22.7
55 – 64 yrs	18,084	8.6	69	21.2	25	8.9
65+ yrs	13,854	6.6	29	8.9	3	1.1
Missing/Unknown	---	---	1	0.3	0	0
Total	209,698	100	324	100	278	100
Gender (18+ yrs)						
Male	92,953	50.3	162	50.8	147	52.3
Female	91,959	49.7	152	47.7	131	46.7
Missing/Unknown	---	---	5	1.5	3	1.0
Total	184,912	100	319	100	281	100
Race (18+ yrs)						
Alaska Native/American Indian	12,516	7.0	9	2.8	9	3.4
Asian	10,192	5.8	6	1.9	7	2.7
Black/African American	10,065	5.7	6	1.9	4	1.5
Pacific Islander	1,361	0.7	2	0.6	1	0.4
White/Caucasian	139,523	78.7	260	81.5	231	87.8
Other	3,715	2.1	23	7.2	2	0.8
Missing/Unknown	---	---	13	4.1	9	3.4
Total	177,372	100	319	100	263	100
Education (25+ yrs)						
HS or GED	38,741	24.2	58	19.2	46	19.5
Vocational/trade school	---	0	11	3.6	9	3.8
Some college/associate /professional degree	59,428	37.2	91	30.1	81	34.4
Four-year degree or higher	46,240	28.9	131	43.4	92	39.2
No degree	15,522	9.7	3	1.0	2	0.9
Missing/Unknown	---	---	8	2.7	5	2.2
Total	159,931	100	302	100	235	100
Individual income (16+ yrs)						
Less than \$12k ¹	36,260	23.3	32	10.0	47	16.6
At least \$12k, but < \$25k	32,511	20.9	35	10.9	31	11.0
At least \$25k, but < \$40k	36,328	23.4	48	15.0	45	15.8
At least \$40k, but < \$75k	38,043	24.5	101	31.6	90	31.7
\$75k or more	12,323	7.9	59	18.4	43	15.2
Missing/Unknown	---	---	45	14.1	28	9.8
Total	155,465	100	320	100	284	100
Work status² (16+ yrs)						
Full-time (35+ hrs/wk)	127,229	66.0	196	69.2	186	65.5
Part-time (< 35 hrs/wk)	28,348	14.7	41	14.5	52	18.3
Did not work/Unemployed ³	37,205	19.3	31	10.9	36	12.7
Missing/Unknown	---	---	15	5.3	10	3.5
Total	192,782	100	283	100	284	100

1 Census category: < \$12,500.

2 Census measure = past year (1999) ; PSNHS measure = "current work status."

3 Respondents who reported themselves "retired" without indicating other full-time or part-time employment and those who reported themselves to be "disabled for work" are excluded in unemployment calculations since they are not considered eligible members of the workforce.

APPENDIX C

PSNHS CODEBOOK

Q: INTNAM

Interviewer FIRST NAME:

INTRODUCTION

[Hello/Good morning/Good evening...etc.], my name is _____.

I'm calling from _____. We're conducting a study of _____ residents' perceptions of gun violence and gun violence prevention.

SCREENER QUESTION #1:

Q: HEAD

Could I please speak with an adult member of the household?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

[If "Yes" (R member of household, or R willing to get household member),
GoTo WILLING; If "No" SkipTo OTHPSN]

SCREENER QUESTION #2:

Q: WILLING

This survey interview will take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. Would you be willing to participate in the survey by answering some questions?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

[If "Yes" GoTo AGE; If "No" SkipTo OTHPSN]

Q: OTHPSN

T: 10 15 1 FONT:"TIMES NEW ROMAN" 10

Is there another person in the household, age 12 or older, who might be willing to participate in the study?

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 0 | No |
| 1 | Yes |
| 8 | [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE] |
| 9 | [REFUSE] |

**[If "Yes" GoTo INTRODUCTION >> WILLING;
If "No" Repeat (through 3rd R)]**

SCREENER QUESTION #3:

Q: AGE

Before we get started, I need to make sure you're eligible for the study. I have to ask...

How old were you, in years, on your LAST birthday?

[If AGE >= 12, Continue; If AGE < 12, SkipTo TOOYNG]

TRANSITION:

Great! You're age makes you eligible for the study.

Let me assure you there are NO "right" or "wrong" answers to any of the questions I'll ask you. This research is only interested in YOUR PERSPECTIVE, which cannot be "wrong" or "incorrect."

For the first few questions, I'm going to ask you if you think some events LIKELY to occur or UNLIKELY to happen.

I'll begin by describing an event to you, and then I will ask you whether you think that event is:

Very likely;
Somewhat likely;
Neither likely nor unlikely;
Somewhat UN-likely; or
Very UN-likely.....to occur.

Q: TOOYNG

I'm sorry, but only those aged 12 or older can participate in the study. Is there anyone else in the household age 12 or older who might want to participate?

0 No
1 Yes
8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
9 [REFUSE]

[If "Yes," GoTo INTRODUCTION >> WILLING;
If "No," SkipTo THANKYOU]

DETERRENCE SECTION:

Q: GCRM CAT

The first statement is: "A person carrying a gun illegally getting caught by authorities."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

1 Very likely
2 Somewhat likely
3 Neither likely nor unlikely
4 Somewhat unlikely
5 Very unlikely
8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
9 [REFUSE]

Q: GCRMCHG

"A person caught committing a gun crime getting prosecuted for that offense."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Neither likely nor unlikely
- 4 Somewhat unlikely
- 5 Very unlikely
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: GCRMSTF

"A person caught committing a crime with a gun being prosecuted swiftly."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Neither likely nor unlikely
- 4 Somewhat unlikely
- 5 Very unlikely
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: GCRMSTA

"A person charged with a gun crime being convicted in STATE court."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Neither likely nor unlikely
- 4 Somewhat unlikely
- 5 Very unlikely
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: GCRMFED

"A person charged with a gun crime being convicted in FEDERAL court."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Neither likely nor unlikely
- 4 Somewhat unlikely
- 5 Very unlikely
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: GCRMPLE

"A prosecutor allowing a gun offender to plead guilty to a less serious offense in order to get a conviction."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Neither likely nor unlikely
- 4 Somewhat unlikely
- 5 Very unlikely
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: GCRMPUN

"A person convicted of a gun crime receiving a long prison sentence."

Do you think this would be Very likely; Somewhat likely; Neither likely nor unlikely; Somewhat UN-likely; or Very UN-likely to occur?

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Somewhat likely
- 3 Neither likely nor unlikely
- 4 Somewhat unlikely
- 5 Very unlikely
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

PERCEPTIONS OF GUN CRIME:

Q: GCRMRIIS

Please tell me how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with this statement:

"Gun crime is on the increase in Anchorage."

Would you Disagree strongly; Disagree Somewhat; Neither disagree nor agree; Agree Somewhat; or Agree strongly with this statement?

- 1 Disagree strongly
- 2 Disagree somewhat

- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Agree somewhat
- 5 Agree strongly
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: LINKGUN

Please tell me how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with this statement:

"Gun violence and illegal drugs are closely linked together."

Would you Disagree strongly; Disagree Somewhat; Neither disagree nor agree; Agree Somewhat; or Agree strongly with this statement?

- 1 Disagree strongly
- 2 Disagree somewhat
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Agree somewhat
- 5 Agree strongly
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

TRANSITION:

Now I'd like to ask you about some potential neighborhood problems.

I will read you a series of problem statements. After each statement I'll ask you if that problem is a:

A very big problem;
A big problem;
Somewhat of a problem; or
Not a problem at all.....IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL PROBLEMS:

Q: PRBYVIOL

The first problem statement is :

"Youth violence."

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | VERY big problem |
| 2 | Big problem |
| 3 | Somewhat of a problem |
| 4 | Not a problem at all |
| 8 | [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE] |
| 9 | [REFUSE] |

Would you say this is a VERY BIG problem, a BIG problem, SOMEWHAT of a problem, or NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL in your neighborhood?

Q: PRBGSTL

"Firearms being stolen from people's homes."

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | VERY big problem |
| 2 | Big problem |
| 3 | Somewhat of a problem |
| 4 | Not a problem at all |
| 8 | [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE] |
| 9 | [REFUSE] |

Would you say this is a VERY BIG problem, a BIG problem, SOMEWHAT of a problem, or NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL in your neighborhood?

Q: PRBVCRM

"Violent crime, in general."

Would you say this is a VERY BIG problem, a BIG problem, SOMEWHAT of a problem, or NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL in your neighborhood?

- 1 VERY big problem
- 2 Big problem
- 3 Somewhat of a problem
- 4 Not a problem at all
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: PRBGANG

"Youth gangs."

Would you say this is a VERY BIG problem, a BIG problem, SOMEWHAT of a problem, or NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL in your neighborhood?

- 1 VERY big problem
- 2 Big problem
- 3 Somewhat of a problem
- 4 Not a problem at all
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: PRBGVIO

"Gun violence."

- 1 VERY big problem
- 2 Big problem
- 3 Somewhat of a problem
- 4 Not a problem at all
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Would you say this is a VERY BIG problem, a BIG problem, SOMEWHAT of a problem, or NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL in your neighborhood?

Q: PRBRACE

"Conflict between racial or ethnic groups."

Would you say this is a VERY BIG problem, a BIG problem, SOMEWHAT of a problem, or NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL in your neighborhood?

- 1 VERY big problem
- 2 Big problem
- 3 Somewhat of a problem
- 4 Not a problem at all
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS:

The next few questions have to do with your awareness of some gun violence prevention efforts in the _____ area.

Q: AWRPREV

The first question is :

Do you know of any gun violence prevention programs here in _____ ?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: AWRPSN

Have you ever heard of the 'Project Safe Neighborhoods' initiative?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: AWRFAKE

Have you ever heard of the 'Operation Ceasefire' program?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: AWRSAF

Have you ever heard of 'Project: Safe Streets - Safe Schools'?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: AWROTH1

Besides those I just mentioned, are there any other gun violence prevention programs in _____ you've heard of?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: AWROTH2

Please name the other programs you've heard of:

Q: AWRPEN

Did you know that a person with a prior conviction for a felony crime can be sentenced to federal prison for possessing a firearm?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: AWRTIM

Have you ever heard the phrase, 'Hard Time for Gun Crime'?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

ATTITUDES TOWARD LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS:

Q: ENFSUPT

Do you support aggressive prosecution of those who get caught possessing a gun and have a prior conviction for a felony crime?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: ENFRAT

In general, how would you rate the performance of law enforcement agencies with respect to combating gun violence...IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

- 1 = Terrible
- 2 = Poor
- 3 = Fair
- 4 = Pretty good
- 5 = Excellent
- 8 = [DON'T KNOW]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

Q: ENFRAT2

What is the FIRST organization or agency that comes to your mind when you hear the words: "LAW ENFORCEMENT"?

SOURCES OF CRIME INFORMATION:

Media

Q: AWRSRC

Thinking about this past week, from what source would you say you got MOST of your crime news? Was it:

- 1 = A local television channel;
- 2 = A cable news network;
- 3 = A local radio station;
- 4 = A local newspaper;
- 5 = The internet; or
- 6 = Word of mouth?
- 7 = [OTHER]
- 8 = [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

Community Governance

Q: CNCL1

Have you EVER attended a COMMUNITY COUNCIL meeting in _____ ?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: CNCL2

How long ago did you attend a community council meeting?

- 1 = Within the past 3 months;
- 2 = At least 3 months but less than 6 months ago;
- 3 = Between 6 months and 12 months ago; or
- 4 = More than 12 months ago?
- 8 = [DON'T KNOW]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

Q: CNCL3

Do you know the name of the community council area you live in?

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 [REFUSE]

Q: CNCL4

Please specify the name of the community council you live in:

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

For the final section of the survey, I am going to ask you some questions that are only used by researchers to compare responses. The answers you give will be kept in the STRICTEST confidence in accordance with federal and state laws.

If there are any questions that you do not want to answer, please let me know and we will move on to another item.

Q: GENDER

What is your gender?

- 1 = [MALE]
- 2 = [FEMALE]
- 3 = [OTHER]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

Q: LOCATION

What is the closest street intersection to your residence?

Q: RACE

What racial OR ethnic background would you say BEST describes you?

- 1 = Alaska Native or American Indian;
- 2 = Asian;
- 3 = Black or African American;
- 4 = Native Hawaiian, Samoan, or other Pacific Islander; or
- 5 = White or Caucasian?
- 6 = [OTHER]

Q: INCOME1

How much total INCOME would you say you PERSONALLY earned or received this past year?

- 1 = Less than \$12,000;

- 2 = At least \$12,000, but less than \$25,000;
- 3 = At least \$25,000, but less than \$40,000;
- 4 = Between \$40,000 and \$75,000; or
- 5 = More than \$75,000?
- 8 = [DON'T KNOW]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

Q: EDUCAT

What is the HIGHEST educational degree you have attained?

- 1 = High school or GED;
- 2 = Vocational or trade school;
- 3 = Some college or two year associate degree; or
- 4 = Four year college degree or higher?
- 5 = [NO DEGREE]
- 8 = [DON'T KNOW]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

Q: EDUCAT2

What is the last grade or year that you completed in school?

Q: WRKSTAT

What is your current work status?

- 1 = Working full-time; that is, 35 or more hours per week in one or more jobs, including self-employment;
- 2 = Working part time;
- 3 = Currently on active military status;
- 4 = Have a job, but out due to illness/leave/furlough/strike;
- 5 = Have seasonal work, but currently not working;
- 6 = Unemployed or laid off and looking for work;
- 7 = Unemployed and not looking for work;
- 8 = Full-time homemaker;
- 9 = In school only;
- 10 = Retired; or,
- 11 = Disabled for work?
- 12 = [OTHER]
- 88 = [DON'T KNOW]
- 99 = [REFUSE]

Q: WRKSTAT2

How would you classify your current work status?

Q: GUNOWN

Have you ever possessed a gun, whether you owned it, borrowed it, shared it with someone, were keeping it for someone, or got it in any other way? DO NOT include BB guns or air rifles.

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes
- 8 = [DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE]
- 9 = [REFUSE]

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE:**Q: THANKYOU**

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions you can contact the study's director by phone at: ###-###-####.

Is there another person in the household, age 12 or older, who might be willing to participate in the study?